



Season: **Easter**

Age Level: **Adults**

April 1, 2018

Easter Sunday

The Victory of the Crucified Messiah

Old Testament: Job 19:25-27 (NRSV)

²⁵ For I know that my Redeemer lives and that at the last he will stand upon the earth;

²⁶ and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, ²⁷ whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!

New Testament: Luke 24:1-12 ()

The Resurrection of Jesus

¹ But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they went in, they did not find the body. ⁴ While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. ⁵ The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. ⁶ Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' ⁸ Then they remembered his words, ⁹ and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles.

¹¹ But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

¹² But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Matthew 4:11 (NRSV)

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

General Concept: God vindicated Jesus' choice as the Messiah.

Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School

Adult: **God vindicates Jesus and his mission as the Messiah.**

Exegesis of the Biblical References

The passage is part of Job's series of laments to God on his condition of relentless suffering. Seemingly God is punishing him. Job was raising questions while trying to understand and find answers as to why God was allowing him to undergo pain and shame. But, despite Job's wailing and complaining he continued to hope that there is life beyond all his misery and ordeal. Here, Job expresses a strong confidence that somehow and somewhere when his end comes, he would still meet God face to face. Job here speaks of a hope that overcomes and transcends what appears to be an irreversible fate of death, isolation and despair. He upholds the faith that death is not the end of all life and all hopes of the human since the ultimate destiny of life is the eventual reunion and reconciliation with God.

Jesus died and it seemed that his adversaries had successfully stopped him from proclaiming the gospel and establishing the Kingdom of God. Jesus was crucified and suffered the most shameful and violent form of punishment because of his obedience to God's will. Jesus faced death and persecution alone because his disciples turned their backs on him out of fear. But, early morning on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James went to Jesus' tomb and were surprised to not find his body. Instead they were told by two men wearing bright clothes that Jesus had risen from the dead. The women then told Jesus' disciples what happened but they did not believe because initially they assumed that their story is nothing but an idle tale, or a fabricated story by the women themselves, reflecting clearly the men's own low regard for women. But these disciples have forgotten what Jesus told them about his suffering and rising on the third day. Their disbelief was illustrated further by Peter who ran to the tomb to see for himself the unbelievable news he heard from the women followers of Jesus.

Jesus chose to enter Jerusalem as his own choice and decision not only to confront the powers and authority that despised him but to fulfill his purpose as the Messiah who will suffer and die an ignominious, humiliating death. In dying he did not only conquer death but received the gift and power of resurrection. Now, Jesus' resurrection from the dead became humanity's ultimate gift, the hope for eternal life, especially of those who are being crucified each day by an unjust system that victimizes and abuses, of those who are oppressed, marginalized, neglected and persecuted by the powerful in society. The resurrection of Jesus is God's affirmation of the path Jesus chose as the Messiah who brings good news to the weak and the poor so that those who follow him may now also conquer death and experience the same resurrection.

As we follow Jesus as our Messiah, we are called to the same degree of obedience to the will of God to confront and challenge the powers and authority that cause affliction on the weak and the poor in our land. We are expected to tread the same path Jesus chose and that is to proclaim the good news to all people especially to those who are desperate and hopeless in their situation, even in the face of danger and various threats. As Jesus' followers we partake in his suffering and being with the marginalized so that through our own witness, service and efforts of solidarity with them in their plight the lowly will also experience the Kingdom of God. The resurrection of Jesus should remind us that we can now overcome suffering and even death as we follow Jesus toward the establishment of God's kingdom here on earth. In Jesus' resurrection we receive hope and assurance that in our obedience to God's call we too will receive the gift and power of the resurrection.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

Mocked by his tormentors and abandoned by his closest friends, Jesus breathed his last with the sole assurance that he had accomplished the mission that God sent him for. It didn't matter what lay in store for him beyond his crucifixion. But God gave Jesus an answer that he didn't ask for. He bestowed on him a blessing never received by anyone before – the power of resurrection from the dead! God didn't just rescue him from the world of the dead which was the destination of every mortal being. God granted him the power of resurrection that no one else can give but the almighty and eternal God. Sharing this power with God, Jesus has received the authority to share it also with those who believe and follow him. God has more than answered Jesus' question about his fate. God made Jesus' resurrection the end goal of every believer who followed him and carried their crosses for his sake.

There is another side to God's answer to Jesus. God affirmed and vindicated his chosen path of obedience. Jesus took up the cause of those who have suffered abuse, violence, neglect, humiliation and oppression by society's powers-that-be. Instead of being decorated he was despised, persecuted, criminalized and made to suffer. By his resurrection, God upheld his choice to be with the world's sufferers. God endorsed Jesus' pursuit of truth and

justice as the right path towards the establishment of his kingdom on earth. Jesus' resurrection is the ultimate proof of God's approval of his work in the world.

I. Objectives

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

1. describe the circumstances surrounding the resurrection of Jesus;
2. explain the meaning and significance of Jesus' resurrection;
3. relate what Job tells with the resurrection of Jesus;
4. point out how God used the resurrection to affirm and vindicate Jesus' role as the Messiah, and
5. confirm that when Jesus is raised from the dead by God, his role of being the Messiah is approved by God.

II. Concept: God vindicates Jesus and his mission as the Messiah.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), hymnal, activity sheet, meta-cards, pen

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome and handshakes
2. Opening prayer: "God of life, we come today to happily celebrate Jesus' resurrection. Be with us once again through the Holy Spirit to help us fully understand what it means to celebrate this joyous occasion especially in this present time and context. In Christ' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" (HFJ # 163)

B. Getting Ready

Ask the adults to share one significant thing they did during the holy week and explain why it is important for them. Have them greet each other, "Happy Resurrection! Jesus is alive!"

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to read Job 19:25-27 and Luke 24:1-14 meditatively. Ask them to relate what Job said in relation to Jesus' resurrection and note insights from the Bible readings.

2. Distribute copies of an excerpt from Dr. Levi V. Oracion's essay on resurrection, "Unless a Seed Falls and Dies", Commentaries on the UCCP Statement of Faith.

The Meaning and Significance of the Resurrection Faith

But, what for us, believers, is the supreme importance of Jesus' resurrection from the dead?

First, the resurrection means the conquest of death - the ultimate enemy of life. The resurrection of Jesus is God's assurance that death does not end all and is not the ultimate end of life. Therefore, the verities that come with the Gospel - truth, justice, love, peace will never be eradicated from the bosom of the human breast, but will ultimately prevail. It means that death no longer holds the terror that it does to ordinary mortals-because the resurrected Christ has ended its power to those who believe in Christ. So Paul exclaims, "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" (I Cor. 15: 55).

Second, the resurrection of Jesus Christ grants the believer an extraordinary courage to stand for truth, love and justice inasmuch as one holds on to the knowledge of God's abiding truth and power. This is true even for those who are

faced with certain death for they do see behind death's illusory claim to finality, and can welcome death to sweep over them. In the resurrection of Jesus, the power of death has been abolished and the appeal of its kingdom abrogated, and therefore they can face death with extraordinary courage and peace of mind.

Third, the resurrection of Jesus Christ creates a huge and powerful hope in the heart and mind of the believer because it pierces through the finality of the veil of death and makes a conquest of every obstacle that stands in the way of the believer as he/she carries on with the mission of the church. Because of the resurrection, Christian faith is perceived as hope through and through and sees every opposition - minor or major, as mere occasions for the exemplification of Christian courage and determination.

Fourth, in the resurrection of Jesus, the present world important as it is, is perceived in its transient character, for as the letter to the Hebrews says "for here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come." The perceived transience of the present world does not suggest to the believer that it is robbed of its importance and significance, for it is the terrain on which the battle for humanity and life is fought. It is where truth, justice, love and freedom should be struggled for, upheld as the real sovereign over all life and the whole of history. It is the place where the original covenant of God with all of humanity should be striven for. Nonetheless, it does not have finality for those who believe, for they still wait for the city that is yet to come.

Fifth, the resurrection of Jesus assures us that there is a process of liberation that is now going on in our lives and in our history which has been defined for us in an essential way in the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus. The ministry of Jesus has laid out for us the way of the world as well as the way of Christ and the ongoing conflict that goes on between them, a conflict in which the followers of Christ are caught and seek to carry forth now and into the future. History is a terrain of struggle for truth, justice, freedom, love and peace. The believers in the crucified and resurrected Lord are necessarily involved and drawn into that struggle. As people who belong to the body of Christ, they too must wage that struggle in the same manner that Christ did.

Sixth, the resurrection of Jesus projects into the future "a new heaven and a new earth." There, those who died in the faith will be garbed in the habiliments of "incorruptibility" in a human community that has been transformed by the power the resurrected Lord.

Yet, for all these, the resurrection faith does not proclaim a triumphalism that rides roughshod over all opposition because it draws its power from the crucified Lord who took the form of a suffering servant and waged his battle through suffering love that culminated with his death on the cross. Thus, what it proclaims is not a cheap and easy Christianity. It is one that makes a creative and significant rejoinder with its Lord who was resolute and faithful to the very end to God's way of suffering love in passing judgment upon sin and evil and in luring authentic humanity to its highest possible expression. This is a very important dimension of the resurrection. Oftentimes, the followers of Jesus mistakenly take the era of the resurrection to signify the end of the cross and all that it is associated with. Thus, they behave like world conquerors.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

1. Tell the class to briefly share insights gained from the reading and listening.
2. Continue sharing of insights asking the learners to the following statements:
 - a. God affirmed and vindicated Jesus being the Messiah.

- b. Jesus' resurrection is the ultimate proof of God's approval on his mission on earth.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "What is God's purpose for raising Jesus from the dead?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

In small groups of three, tell the learners to write on meta-cards three (3) ways to witness to the resurrection faith and take part with God's continuing affirmation and vindication of Jesus' mission through the church.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering by expressing one's joy of affirmation through a phrase and share what makes him/her joyful today other than understanding the meaning of Jesus Christ's resurrection.
2. Closing song: "We Thank You, God, for Sunday" (HFJ # 170)
3. Closing prayer: "May our lives prove useful to Jesus' resurrection. May our lips continue to proclaim that Jesus is risen. May our works manifest Jesus obedience to God. May our lives be channels of love and life for the people we have relationships. In Christ's name we ardently pray. Amen."



April 8, 2018

Second Sunday of Easter

Encountering the Doubters and the Fearful

Old Testament: Joshua 1:9 (NRSV)

⁹'I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.'

New Testament: Mark 16:4-8 (NRSV)

⁴When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.' ⁸So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

John 20:24-29 (NRSV)

Jesus and Thomas

²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.' ²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' ²⁸Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' ²⁹Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

General Concept: The risen Messiah manifests himself to the doubting and fearful disciples. Experiencing the Risen Lord removes our doubts and fears.

Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School

Adult: **Experiencing the Risen Lord removes our doubts and fears.**

Exegesis of the Biblical References

Joshua succeeded Moses in the task of leading the Israelites to the promised land. It took forty years for the first generation of Israelites to reach the vicinity of the River Jordan where the promised land was already within reach. After forty years, some Israelites might have already lost hope, got tired, grew impatient and became discouraged and doubtful waiting for the time when they can enter and inherit the promised land. But God assured Joshua that God will be with him and with the people as they enter and occupy the land where they will establish an alternative community of God's chosen people, an alternative to what they have experienced and suffered for so long in Egypt.

In the resurrection account of the Gospel of Luke, women visited the tomb of Jesus

when the Sabbath was over. They went there to bring spices. But they were surprised that the large stone at the entrance of the tomb was already rolled away and Jesus' body was no longer there. Instead, they saw two men in dazzling clothes who told them that Jesus has risen from the dead. The men instructed the women to tell Jesus' disciples. So they told the eleven and all the rest what they have experienced.

In the Gospel of John, after Jesus had risen he appeared first to Mary Magdalene who stood outside the tomb crying because she thought Jesus' body was stolen. When Mary Magdalene experienced the Risen Lord, Jesus removed her fears and she received assurance and comfort. Thomas, on the other hand, who was not around when Jesus appeared to his disciples doubted the news. Thomas insisted that only upon seeing the nail marks of Jesus will he believe in the story that he indeed was risen. After a week the disciples were gathered in a house when Jesus appeared and confronted the unbelieving Thomas and told him to put his fingers on the nail marks so that he would stop doubting. Jesus went on to tell Thomas and his disciples that those who believed even if they have not seen are even more blessed.

In the Gospel of Mark, the resurrection passage highlights the name of Peter. The young man dressed in white robe specified to Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome to inform Peter and the other disciples that Jesus has risen. Peter who earlier affirmed that Jesus is the Messiah, and through whom Jesus promised to build his church, is also the one who denied him three times later on. The mention of Peter's name in connection to the resurrection of Jesus can be understood as a preparation for Peter's restoration from a person who doubted and feared towards a person becoming one who is a courageous and loyal witness to the resurrection of his master and Lord. He now becomes a source of hope for acceptance and forgiveness to those similarly fearful and weak of heart and who may have also the tendency to deny Christ in crucial moments. They can be assured that they can and will also experience the presence of the Risen Lord in their lives.

Indeed, the encounter with the Risen Lord has given Christ's followers the courage, assurance and motivation to stand firm and defend their faith that Jesus is the Messiah. Their encounter with the resurrected Jesus has given them the understanding, focus and direction to continue the work as mandated by Jesus. And in times of their doubts and fears, the Risen Lord appears to them in many ways and in various occasions to remove their unbelief and fear. In the same manner that whenever Christians succumb to doubts and fears in their ministry and service which can lead them astray and make them confused and discouraged, Jesus would appear through the equipping of the Holy Spirit to give us new direction, focus and determination allowing us to confront and press on with challenging the powers and authority that prevents the establishment of God's kingdom. The resurrection of Jesus is Christianity's source of hope for power to realize and experience the new life and the completely new reality that the risen Lord now bestows to all those who would remain steadfast and loyal in their faith and witness to his truth and liberating love even up to the end.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

For Christians, Jesus' resurrection is the indispensable anchor of faith. This is also the main stumbling block that keeps others from becoming or remaining Christian. The resurrection episode depicting Thomas' reluctance to recognize the risen Jesus exemplifies the challenge that believers face then and now. Our rational faculties tell us to verify the truthfulness of any claim from empirical evidence. If there is nothing empirical to support such claim, either it is rejected or the rational processes are suspended in order to allow the mind to accept the claim. Faith-claims, however, don't need the consent of reason because faith, particularly faith in the risen Jesus, originates from experience *prior* to the operation of the intellect. Thomas touching Jesus' wounds is a metaphor of an experience with the risen

Lord.

The question is what sort of experience can mediate a faith-experience? Those who require a mystical kind of experience would shut out others who are not given to any shade of mysticism. But Christ is Lord and Savior not just of the mystically inclined but also of those whose perception of reality is that of a secular modern world. A secular kind of Christianity (Dietrich Bonhoeffer) would show the utter hospitality and inclusive reach of the Christian faith.

For other believers whose faith is ethically oriented, experience with the risen Jesus is truly and effectively mediated through a faithful following of Jesus' ethical stance. They take Jesus' challenge to carry their own crosses to the extent that the powers who dominate people's lives are challenged and unmasked for what they truly are.

Many others devote themselves to building up the church from the inside. They carry the burden of nurturing young members in the ways of Jesus as a counterforce to the corrupting influence of a decadent environment. Some of them encounter Jesus in the care for the sick, the shut-in, the despairing and confused, and many more according to the diversity of gifts poured out by the Spirit to the church.

In short, it is by immersing in the life and work of Jesus through the church and in the larger society that believers may find a living Lord and Savior.

I. Objectives

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

1. summarize the details of Jesus' appearance to his fearful and doubting disciples;
2. look back to Joshua's command to be strong in the Lord as a prelude to Jesus' resurrection;
3. conclude that Jesus' appearance is a solid proof of God's providence in times of fear and doubt not only to the disciples but to all believers, and
4. express one's thanks to God for making Jesus alive to give us hope of eternal life.

II. Concept: Experiencing the Risen Lord removes our doubts and fears.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), hymnal, activity sheet

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome and handshake time
2. Opening prayer: "Dear God, we come today mindful of your abiding presence among us through the Holy Spirit who removes our fears and doubts. Teach us once again your ways so that we may continue to become better persons and channels of your love and justice; that the world may know and feel that you are alive in us. This we pray in Christ's name. Amen.
3. Opening song: "He Lives" (HFJ # 164)

B. Getting Ready

Let the adults share their experience related to the celebration of the Holy week and during the Resurrection Sunday.

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to read the biblical references and guide them in the discussion.
 - a. Mark 16:4-8. Point out that the story tells of the fearful reaction of the women after hearing that Jesus rose from the dead. The same fear and even terror restricted the women from saying anything to anyone. Discuss the following

points:

- 1) the possibility of persecution due to association with a crucified man;
- 2) the potential for mockery since women were considered unreliable witnesses; and
- 3) the unprecedented character of this commission for women.

For Mark's listeners, therefore, the commission to go and tell the stories of Jesus' resurrection was related to the possibility of taking up your own cross. Being publicly identified with Jesus was potentially dangerous.

- b. Instruct the class to also silently read John 20:24-29. Ask one or two volunteers to tell in summary form what the story is all about. Point out that the story tells of a doubting disciple Thomas whose remarks probably led Jesus to prove himself to Thomas ordering him to put his fingers on the nail marks on Jesus' hand and also his hand in Jesus' side. As a response, Thomas affirms Jesus Lordship and Divinity exclaiming, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus says to Thomas that those who believe even without seeing are blessed.
2. Ask the class to relate what Joshua said (Joshua 1:9) to how we believers should react to the news of Jesus being victorious over death.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Ask the following questions:

1. Which of the following reasons do you agree with the most as to why the women did not tell anyone about the message of Jesus' resurrection? Justify your choice.
 - a. possibility of persecution and ostracism
 - b. self-preservation
 - c. natural reaction
2. What can you say about Thomas' reaction?
3. What can you say about what Jesus said to Thomas in John 20:29?
4. In what ways can we encounter today the resurrected Jesus in our life as individuals and as a church? Give examples.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "How does the experience of the risen Lord remove our doubts and fears?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Collect reaction by saying, "I agree" or "I disagree" on the statement: *Jesus' appearance is a solid proof of God's providence in times of fear and doubt not only to the disciples but to all believers.*
2. Group all who agree, and have those who disagree also form another group. Have them talk about their group's answer..

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering: Each one joyfully says, "Thank you loving God, for making Jesus alive to give us hope of eternal life" and puts his/her offering to the basket.
2. Closing song: "He Lives" (HFJ # 164)
3. Closing prayer: Each learner says a thanksgiving prayer to express one's thanks to God for making Jesus alive and for giving us hope of eternal life.

April 15, 2018

Third Sunday after Resurrection

Witnessing to the Risen Lord

Old Testament: Isaiah 43:10-12 (NRSV)

¹⁰You are my witnesses, says the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. ¹¹I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no saviour. ¹²I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses, says the LORD.

New Testament: John 21:4-19 (NRSV)

⁴Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵Jesus said to them, 'Children, you have no fish, have you?' They answered him, 'No.' ⁶He said to them, 'Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish.

⁷That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the lake. ⁸But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards* off. ⁹When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. ¹⁰Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.' ¹¹So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹²Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, 'Who are you?' because they knew it was the Lord. ¹³Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Jesus and Peter

¹⁵When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' ¹⁶A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' ¹⁷He said to him the third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' And he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep. ¹⁸Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.' ¹⁹(He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, 'Follow me.'

General Concept: Having encountered the Risen Lord, the disciples went about telling the good news of God's victory over sin and death.

Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School

Adult: Having encountered the Risen Lord, the disciples went about telling the good news of God's victory over sin and death.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

The influence of other gods introduced by the Babylonians during the time of exile competed with the influence of the God of Israel. This was a cause of struggle among the Israelites specially while in exile. Some Israelites began to doubt Yahweh's power and slowly turned towards other gods worshiped by their powerful captors. Second Isaiah, the prophet who was also among the exiles, became God's voice that strongly criticized and warned those who were unfaithful and idolatrous. God through Isaiah confronted the exiles by pointing out to them that these gods has not done anything at all for them. God reminded the Israelites that there is no other God like Yahweh who can save them from their captivity. God calls on the chosen people to become the witnesses to God's saving power.

After Jesus has risen, he appeared unexpectedly to his disciples for the third time while his disciples were in the boat fishing. The disciples did not recognize it was Jesus at first perhaps because it was early in the morning and Jesus was at a distance standing on the shore. When Jesus instructed them to cast the net on the right side of the boat and a large number of fish were caught, only then did they realize it was Jesus. Upon realizing it was Jesus, Peter jumped into the water and rushed to meet him. When the disciples came to the shore, Jesus invited them to have breakfast with him. After eating Jesus asked Peter three times "do you love me?" to which Peter answered three times also, "I love you" and every time Peter answered, Jesus would tell him, "feed my sheep." Jesus then revealed to Peter the task he needed to accomplish for the glory of God. Afterwards, Jesus invited him to "follow me."

Today, as believers respond to the invitation of Jesus to follow him, at times they encounter unexpected hurdles that may prevent them from recognizing the presence of Jesus. It is always ideal to listen well to the words of Jesus so we can always set our eyes on accomplishing the task entrusted to us. And when doubts, disappointments and discouragement seem to cloud our vision, our ears need to always hear his voice and discern his will for us so that we can be led back to him and to his mission. Just like the disciples who did not at first recognize Jesus and yet they threw their nets upon hearing his words, we too need to have a believing heart that Christ will always be there to he bless us and sustain us with what we need as we carry out the task of sharing and witnessing to the good news. And when we exhibit the same kind of trusting obedience as that of the disciples, we too may reap the same abundant blessings that they received from Jesus.

Witnessing for Jesus requires focus and attention because just like Peter who was asked three times by Jesus, we may encounter the same kind of questioning that would repeatedly challenge our sincerity and intention. We may even be confronted by strong reactions from those trying to resist and even oppose the kind of teaching and witnessing that we do in the name of Jesus. For we are representing a new set of values and perspectives, those that characterize life in the kingdom of God which run counter to and opposed to the dominant materialistic and individualistic values of this age. We need to be consistent with the kind of message we tell and the kind of love we render in our ministries. At times we may feel tired, frustrated or hurt when people seem to question our actions, yet we have to be prepared for Jesus has already told us that following him will always be painful, difficult and at times costly. But as followers of Jesus, we must be ready to give our life as we tell the world the good news that Christ has risen and that we can glorify God even more meaningfully through our faithful adherence to the teachings and examples lived by Jesus while he was on earth. Every day we are always called, and every day we are

expected to follow and obey in all faithfulness and trust in the power and grace of God in and through Jesus.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

Unlike the mystery religions of the Greeks who kept the mysteries of the gods within the closed confines of the circle of believers, the early Christians received from the Lord the mandate to announce his resurrection to the whole world. They were to tell all people that Jesus has conquered death and that everyone is invited to share with him the power of resurrection. This was the church's instant message following their encounter with the risen Jesus.

The ancient Greeks were obsessed with the problem of death. Hades, or the abode of the dead awaits even the heroes who are not among the immortals of Mt. Olympus. The Greek mystery religions offer a way of salvation from mortality through a mystical experience with a god who descends from the immortal realm. On the other hand, the gospel tells the story of a flesh-and-blood person who was executed by the Romans as an enemy of the Empire. In Jesus they will find a savior whom God has awarded immortality for resisting the evil powers of the world. He is the true savior of those who suffered death for the sake of truth and justice. Jesus was speaking about them when he said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for justice's sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:10) – that is, immortality in the mind of Gentiles.

This message threatened the guardians of the Empire more than the man himself, and sought to put an end to this "nonsense." It is likely the reason why most of the apostles, including Paul and many of the early Christians, suffered violent deaths courtesy of Rome. Many of those who survived were forced to renounce Jesus to escape being fed to wild animals or torched alive. As time passed, however, it appears that the essentially dangerous elements of the primitive gospel were suppressed, if not expurgated, as Christianity eventually joined the ranks of religions that gained imperial favor.

History may have done violence to the gospel but its primitive message has remained and is now the best kept secret of the church. Nevertheless, some Christian activists who may have despaired over the church's historical complicity to the genocide of native populations and other crimes under the regime of colonialism and neo-colonialism have found inspiration and hope in the rediscovery of the gospel's early message. The truth of Jesus will not be silenced forever for it is God's power to free the world from all forms of captivity.

I. Objectives

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

1. describe how Jesus appeared to his disciples by the seaside;
2. explain the significance of the witnessing of the disciples about the victory of Jesus over death;
3. make one's commitment in the proclaiming and witnessing mission as an application of Jesus' mandate to the disciples; and
4. express joy when one is able to tell others about Jesus who is raised from the dead.

II. Concept: Having encountered the Risen Lord, the disciples went about telling the good news of God's victory over sin and death.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), hymnal, activity sheet, song chart, notebook and pen

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "God of life, we invoke the presence and inspiration of your Holy Spirit to enlighten us even more that we may be able to live in the way Jesus lived in his lifetime and ministry. As followers of the risen Lord in these critical times, when the powers of sin and death prevail, we ask that you strengthen our firm resolve to walk the extra mile in our witness of the good news of your kingdom. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "Yours is the Glory, Resurrected One" (HFJ#171)

B. Getting Ready

Inquire: "What is meant by the words proclaim and witness? How would you characterize one who proclaims and witnesses?" Say: "The word *witness* comes from the Greek word "marturia" which means martyrdom. Jesus' disciples proclaimed and witnessed to the good news of Jesus' victory over death even if it meant their persecution and even death. Many of them were martyrs of faith."

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the learners to read silently Isaiah 43:10-12 and John 21:4-19.
2. After the silent reading, emphasize that Isaiah 43:10-12 tells of Isaiah's prophetic words to the Israelites whom God chose to be witnesses of God. Ask: "What was God's people going to be/do? Who are they to be witnesses for? What were they to be witnesses of?"
3. In reading John 21:4-19, form three groups and assign specific verses to each group. Remind the class that the objective of the activity is to explain the circumstances surrounding the appearance of Jesus by the seaside.
Group 1: John 21:4-8
Group 2: John 21:9-14
Group 3: John 21:15-19
4. Present on the board some blank thought bubbles. Tell the class to supply a sentence about being a follower of Jesus Christ given the following situations.
 - a. The things we give up
 - b. The ways we change in doing things for others
 - c. The truth that He is in charge and will provide for the things we really need
 - d. The unavoidable circumstances when we do not do the right thing in order to survive
 - e. The commitment to proclaim and witness in the midst of one's hardship

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Ask these questions and encourage the adults to share their insights and to answer some other questions raised.

- a. What did Jesus prepare for the disciples at the seaside? (Jesus prepared a charcoal fire with fish on it, and also bread.)
- b. What message do you think the miracle of fish catch, the preparation of the charcoal fire with fish on it, and bread try to tell the disciples? (That Jesus is truly alive, flesh and bones, and hungry, and that he is the same Jesus who cares for them.)
- c. If the disciples encountered the risen Lord, could you say you too encountered the risen Lord? How?
- d. What judgment would you make about those church workers and lay people victims of human rights violations and extra-judicial killings for exposing the evils

of those in power and other forces of sin and death in society?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

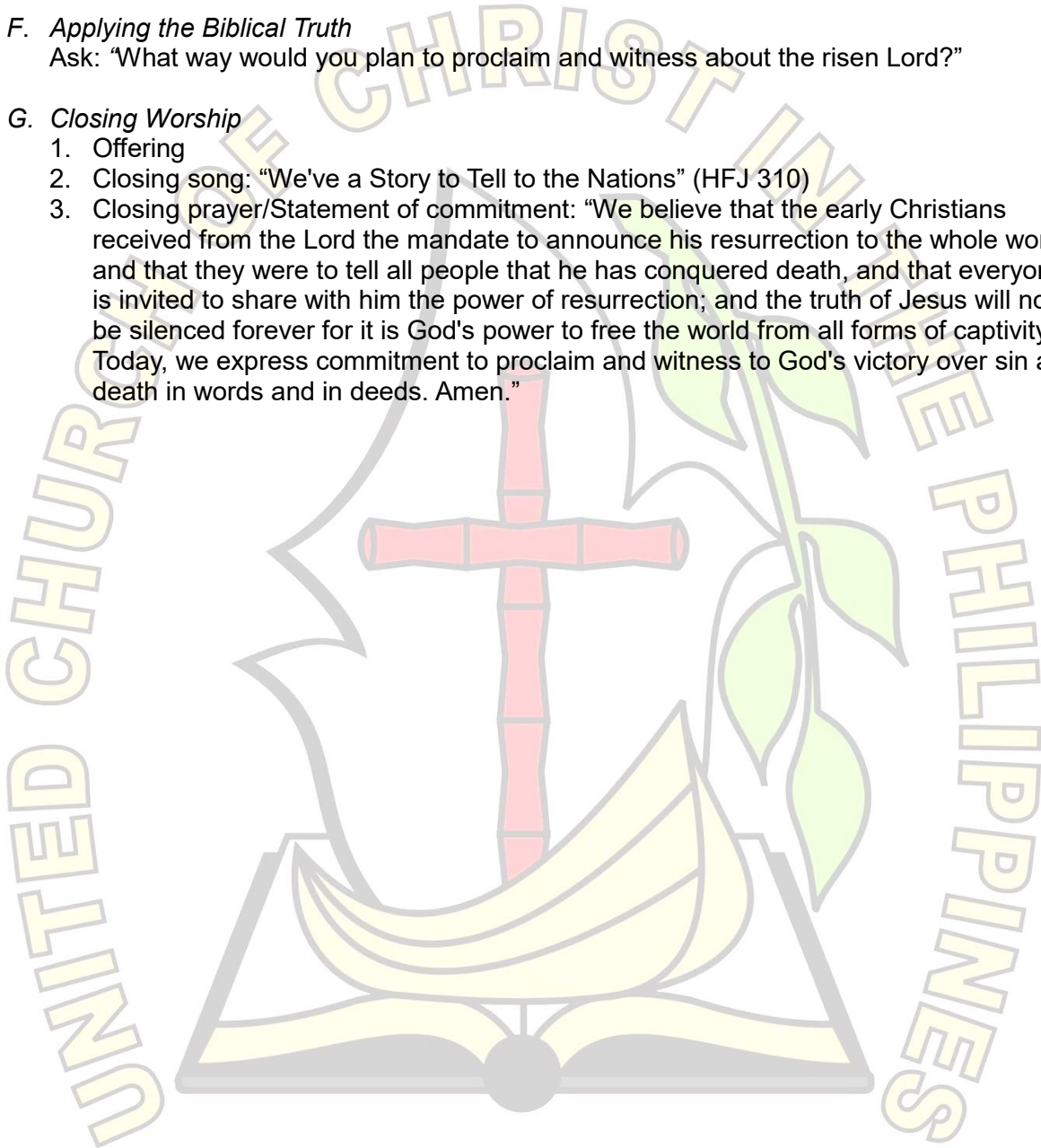
Ask: "What conclusions can you draw from the discussion and sharing of insights?"
(Sometimes following Jesus is hard and sometimes it is easy. Every Christian is expected to proclaim and witness to the Risen Lord.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Ask: "What way would you plan to proclaim and witness about the risen Lord?"

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations" (HFJ 310)
3. Closing prayer/Statement of commitment: "We believe that the early Christians received from the Lord the mandate to announce his resurrection to the whole world and that they were to tell all people that he has conquered death, and that everyone is invited to share with him the power of resurrection; and the truth of Jesus will not be silenced forever for it is God's power to free the world from all forms of captivity. Today, we express commitment to proclaim and witness to God's victory over sin and death in words and in deeds. Amen."



April 22, 2018

Fourth Sunday after Resurrection

Affirming Christ's Lordship

Old Testament: Psalm 24:1-2 (NRSV)

Entrance into the Temple Of David. A Psalm.

¹ The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; ² for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.

New Testament: 1 Corinthians 10:14 (NRSV)

¹⁴ Therefore, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols.

General Concept: The earth belongs to the Risen Lord and not to idols and gods shaped and created by people.

Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School

Adult: The earth belongs to the Risen Lord and not to idols and gods shaped and created by people.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

Psalm 24 is a poetry attributed to King David. It takes the form of a song sung during worship or celebration in ancient Israel. The psalmist here is praising God's lordship over all realms, affirming God as the creator of all things and that everything belongs to God. By strong implication, the psalmist affirms that God owns all things and humbles and mocks anyone who claims lordship over creation other than God. It is a praise that also warns those who may attempt to attribute creation to other gods apart from the creator God. There is no power and being in this world to whom the origins, the existence, meaning, sustenance and redemption of all creation from the forces of chaos may be attributed. There is only one creator, redeemer, sustainer God who reigns sovereign over all creation, and no creature, no matter how gifted he or she may be, can ever make such a claim. The creature can never take the place of the creator. The mortal can never assume the powers of an eternal, immortal being. This relationship can never be reversed. The creature should always be reminded of his/her proper place in the scheme of creation.

Paul wrote the letter to the church in Corinth to address serious issues reported to him. Since Corinth is a commercial city that caters to both land and sea trade, it is normally crowded with different peoples with different religions and practices. Christians in Corinth are a minority group so members strive to compete and worship in the midst of a pagan-dominated environment. Thus, it may not be easy for Christians to remain firm and loyal to their faith in the midst of such a highly cosmopolitan context.

From what may be discerned from the text and its immediate background, it would seem that the church in Corinth have successfully converted practitioners of other religions to Christianity. However, these new converts may not have totally forgotten nor gotten rid of their old practices. Thus, idolatry became one of the issues that Paul has to address in his letter to the Corinthian Christians warning them of the different forms idolatry may take. Since Paul included idolatry in his letter, this may have become a serious problem in the church that could be affecting their unity. Paul's warning for Christians to flee from idolatry is part of his long list of warnings not to succumb to the same sins committed by their forebears. Paul encouraged the Christians not to partake and participate in any idol worship as this is not in accordance to the teachings they inherited from Jesus.

Idolatry today is no longer just the worship of little gods nor of certain images popularly recognized as objects of religious veneration. Idolatry could be any practice, habit, belief or values that distract our attention and focus from what essentially should be the work and mission of the church. It could be any system that diverts our time and priorities away from affirming that everything belongs to the risen Lord and that God is sovereign Lord over all things and all creatures of the earth. It becomes real when the work and mission of the church as embodied and exemplified by Jesus begins to take lesser priority in our daily life activities, when we begin acquiring values and perspectives that are contrary to the values of the kingdom of God as preached by Jesus, when we become more enamored with acquiring possessions and working only for our own advancement rather than aiming to be possessed by the spirit of the Lord which leads us towards a more selfless life of obedience, service and witnessing. Avoiding idolatry is not only a matter of being in church every Sunday though it will certainly help in the nurturing and equipping of the believers for mission work. To avoid idolatry is to reject any attachment to anything that ruins our relationship with God and with others. It is avoiding all efforts that advance selfish interest at the expense of other people's welfare and happiness. It is finding one's own peace and security solely in God as one simply puts all his/her trust and faith in God's ability to sustain, protect, and redeem the faithful even in the most difficult of times.

Though we live in a Christian-dominated country, we live in a culture and religious context dominated by foreign values and foreign perspectives imposed upon us by our former colonizers that do not reflect the authentic life of faith exemplified by Jesus. Most of us may have become alienated already from the indigenous values bequeathed to us by our indigenous ancestors: the basic love and care for nature and the rest of creation, the value of caring for each other and of being part of a community of kindred faith, the value of loving and accepting even the stranger, those different from us. These are all values reflective of the Gospel message exemplified and taught by Jesus. Thus, this is a situation similar to the struggles of Christians in Corinth against idolatry. We can still see people putting so much time appreciating material possessions yet giving less time to help the needy. But we have the church and faithful servants who are the Pauls of modern times who continue to remind us to flee from idolatry. God through the church and its members continue to remind us not to commit the same mistakes of our history but learn from these mistakes. We must be vigilant in guarding the interest of the mission of the church in our community. We must be conscious always in everything we do and aspire for in life, and of the time and effort we spend on such things that can become our own idols. We must not blindly accept and embrace concepts that represent idolatrous values and perspectives, and which prevent us from being possessed by that spirit of selfless service and witness to the love and righteousness of our God in and through Jesus. Just like the Psalmist we need to passionately affirm the lordship of God in all creation, in all spheres of life, possessed by that same spirit and exhibiting the same zeal when affirming the lordship of Christ in our own daily work and activities.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

At the very outset it must be made clear that Christ's lordship over all the earth is not a chauvinistic claim against other communities of faith. It is addressed to Christians who lack the will to submit all of life under Christ's lordship. They would rather reserve some compartments of their lives for loyalties other than Jesus Christ upon whom God has granted all authorities in heaven and on earth. These objects of loyalties are called idols because they are formed and chosen by their worshippers. A favorite idol, for example is Profit. It's an idol that rivals Jesus Christ because its domains are strictly off limits to the gospel's demands. Another idol that rivals Christ's lordship is called Political Expediency. When politics is played without ethical considerations it becomes an alien domain that shuts

out the gospel. And there are many lesser idols that compromise Christ's sovereignty.

The worship of idols is not confined to the occasion of personal, family or public worship. It takes place most hours of the day on a daily basis. In fact, worshipping the Lord Jesus may be confined only to an hour or two on Sundays at the church. For all intents and purposes, idols may be worshipped more regularly and religiously than the one true God. The UCCP declaration that Jesus is the living Lord of all of life and of all creation cannot be compromised. Rather, it must be affirmed again and again every time believers of Christ are faced with situations that challenge the gospel. It is a primary task of the church to remind the members of Peter's declaration – "I would rather obey God than persons" – especially during its community gathering in worship.

The challenge of the environment is posed most urgently to all of humankind. Scientists have found out that the current environmental crisis that is leading to an ecological catastrophe is human-made. People that are supposed to have a Christian conscience cannot escape from the Lord's judgment because they form part of a cabal of economic and financial managers who make decisions in obedience to the commands of idols. It is a test of the church's loyalty to the risen Jesus to announce God's judgment on a world for its failure to stop the continuing despoliation of creation.

I. Objectives

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

1. begin to identify that Jesus is the Lord of creation;
2. begin to acknowledge that Jesus is the Lord of His people,
3. explain what Jesus' Lordship over creation and His people mean; and
4. express one's thanks for Jesus being our Lord.

II. Concept: The earth belongs to the Risen Lord and not to idols and gods shaped created by people.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), hymnal, activity sheet

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "We come today prepared to learn from you, O God, who nurtures in Jesus Christ. Be with us again through the inspiring and enabling power of the Holy Spirit that we may fully affirm with conviction the earth belongs to the Risen Lord and not to idols and gods created by people. This is our prayer. Amen."
3. Opening song: "The Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer" (HFJ # 1)

B. Getting Ready

Let the adults talk about the stewardship of self, talents, and treasures in their local church. Encourage them to share their insights on how this stewardship consciousness among the members remains vibrant and alive in the church. Emphasize giving regularly, sacrificially, cheerfully, generously, and mindful of God's priorities.

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to read silently Psalm 24:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 10:14.
2. Encourage the class to explain the meaning of the bible readings in relation to their daily life.
3. Ask them to read excerpts from the Exegesis for the Biblical References and Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users using this outline.

- a. The declaration of David of the Lord and glorious King of the Kingdom that belongs totally to the King of kings (paragraphs 1, 3, and 6).

(Found in the workbook)

1. Psalm 24 is a poetry attributed to King David. It takes the form of a song sung during worship or celebration in ancient Israel. The psalmist here is praising God's lordship over all realms, affirming God as the creator of all things and that everything belongs to God. By strong implication, the psalmist affirms that God owns all things and humbles and mocks anyone who claims lordship over creation other than God. It is a praise that also warns those who may attempt to attribute creation to other gods apart from the creator God. There is no power and being in this world to whom the origins, the existence, meaning, sustenance and redemption of all creation from the forces of chaos may be attributed. There is only one creator, redeemer, sustainer God who reigns sovereign over all creation, and no creature, no matter how gifted he or she may be, can ever make such a claim. The creature can never take the place of the creator. The mortal can never assume the powers of an eternal, immortal being. This relationship can never be reversed. The creature should always be reminded of his/her proper place in the scheme of creation. 3.

At the very outset it must be made clear that Christ's lordship over all the earth is not a chauvinistic claim against other communities of faith. It is addressed to Christians who lack the will to submit all of life under Christ's lordship. They would rather reserve some compartments of their lives for loyalties other than Jesus Christ upon whom God has granted all authorities in heaven and on earth. These objects of loyalties are called idols because they are formed and chosen by their worshippers. A favorite idol, for example is Profit. It's an idol that rivals Jesus Christ because its domains are strictly off limits to the gospel's demands. Another idol that rivals Christ's lordship is called Political Expediency. When politics is played without ethical considerations it becomes an alien domain that shuts out the gospel. And there are many lesser idols that compromise Christ's sovereignty.

6. The challenge of the environment is posed most urgently to all of humankind. Scientists have found out that the current environmental crisis that is leading to an ecological catastrophe is human-made. People that are supposed to have a Christian conscience cannot escape from the Lord's judgment because they form part of a cabal of economic and financial managers who make decisions in obedience to the commands of idols. It is a test of the church's loyalty to the risen Jesus to announce God's judgment on a world for its failure to stop the continuing despoliation of creation.

- b. Paul instructs us to flee from idolatry (paragraphs 2, 4, and 5).

2.

Paul's warning for Christians to flee from idolatry is part of his long list of warnings not to succumb to the same sins committed by their forebears. Paul encouraged the Christians not to partake and participate in any idol worship as this is not in accordance to the teachings they inherited from Jesus.

4. ...we have the church and faithful servants who are the Pauls of modern times who continue to remind us to flee from idolatry. God through the church and its members continue to remind us not to commit the same mistakes of our history but learn from these mistakes. We must be vigilant in guarding the interest of the mission of the church in our community. We must be conscious always in everything we do and aspire for in life, and of the time and effort we

spend on such things that can become our own idols. We must not blindly accept and embrace concepts that represent idolatrous values and perspectives, and which prevent us from being possessed by that spirit of selfless service and witness to the love and righteousness of our God in and through Jesus. Just like the Psalmist we need to passionately affirm the lordship of God in all creation, in all spheres of life, possessed by that same spirit and exhibiting the same zeal when affirming the lordship of Christ in our own daily work and activities.

5. The worship of idols is not confined to the occasion of personal, family or public worship. It takes place most hours of the day on a daily basis. In fact, worshipping the Lord Jesus may be confined only to an hour or two on Sundays at the church. For all intents and purposes, idols may be worshipped more regularly and religiously than the one true God. The UCCP declaration that Jesus is the living Lord of all of life and of all creation cannot be compromised. Rather, it must be affirmed again and again every time believers of Christ are faced with situations that challenge the gospel. It is a primary task of the church to remind the members of Peter's declaration – "I would rather obey God than man" – especially during its community gathering in worship.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

1. Ask these questions:
 - a. How would you define idolatry?
 - b. What do you believe are the idols of people today?
 - c. Have you had an experience of having an idol in your life?
2. Point out: Anything that replaces people's loyalty and obedience to God becomes an idol; something that becomes more valuable than kingdom values of peace, justice, caring, sharing, service and their likes. Capitalists destroy the environment in the name of so-called "development", but the reality is greed for profit ultimately becomes an idol. Deforestation, destructive and massive mining activities proliferate at the expense of ecological balance and people's lives.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "How can church people show they have no other Lord than Jesus and that they acknowledge that Jesus is the Lord of creation?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Remind the adults to be aware of the landscape of the church that feast on something other than the gospel. Find out how members celebrate the gifts received rather than celebrating the Giver instead.
2. Ask the adults one by one to share practical ways of showing that they have no other Lord than Jesus.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "The Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer" (HFJ # 1)
3. Closing prayer: Have each learner say a prayer of thanks to God for having Jesus as his or her Lord and Savior.
4. Response: Threefold Amen.

April 29, 2018

Fifth Sunday after Resurrection

Knowing God through the Risen Christ

Old Testament: Psalm 2:7 (NRSV)

⁷ I will tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to me, 'You are my son; today I have begotten you.

New Testament: Colossians 1:15-17 (NRSV)

The Supremacy of Christ

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or omions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

General Concept: Jesus Christ is the expression of who God is for us.

Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School

Adult: **Jesus Christ is the expression of who God is for us.**

Exegesis of the Biblical References

Psalm 2 belongs to the category of Royal Psalms whose primary concern is to give a clear definition of the significance of the choice of King David as the king of Israel. This also includes the religious-theological justification for the Davidic Dynasty. This kind of choice or election may be seen as a manifestation of the very special relationship established by God with the Davidic Kings but first and foremost with King David himself. Messianic prophecies have foretold the anointment of one who will come as messiah-king and whose description is identified in a very close relationship with God to the extent that he will be called God's son. King David and his successors had established the Davidic dynasty particularly in the southern part of Israel which is Judah. They had never extended its boundaries until its collapse into the hands of the Babylonian invaders. The Israelite ruling elite was brought into exile in Babylon in the years 597 BCE and 587 BCE.

Psalm 2:7 as a royal psalm was expressed primarily as a tribute to the Davidic king, and as a message also to peoples beyond the boundary of Israel whom the Davidic dynasty had failed to conquer and control. The ends of the earth or the whole world are destined to be governed by the Davidic person identified in Ps.2:7. It is by God's initiative in line with the Davidic dynasty that the appointed one or Messiah will soon arise. Historically, the Davidic dynasty had failed to establish its kingdom beyond the territory of Israel. The insistence on the long ignored special relationship that has been revealed in Ps 2:7 represent a paradigm shift in the revival of the royal and divinely inspired claims of the Davidic dynasty.

Pauline Christological understanding presents Jesus Christ as the head of all creation and the representation of the unseen image of God. Christ holding the authority and power over the whole creation is a fact that must be asserted by the believers; thrones, dominations, sovereignty and all powers and all things were created through Christ and for Christ alone. The death of Jesus on the cross has brought to the forefront the significant shift of meaning in the re-establishment of the relationship of God with God's chosen one and the redemption and reconciliation (instead of domination) of all peoples and nations in the most universal and inclusive sense. Jesus has set a new standard as far as concern and reconciliation for all humanity is concerned. The new universal norm set by Jesus as the

chosen son of God means that humanity will regain their dignity and real freedom by looking at Jesus and believing, following in the way he had blazed for them. The love of God has been revealed to all humanity through Jesus Christ. This love of God is not a simple walk in the park for this will involve pain and sacrifice in faithful obedience as people become imbued with the spirit of the truth that will set them free. Thus, the awakened child of God emerges as a new being in Christ with a clear sense of purpose and mission in life, filled with the spirit of God's liberating love, reconciliation and peace.

The special relationship revealed by God to the Davidic dynasty as the sole appointed ruler of Israel had met strong opposition. The Davidic dynasty eventually collapsed into the hands of the Babylonians. But the Royal Psalm was not forgotten by the people. They kept praying for an eventual time of the return of their much-awaited Davidic messiah. After some time, Christians found the new and ultimate meaning of the messiah in the image of Jesus the Christ who suffered but whose family lineage could be traced back to King David. Paul in the letter to the Colossians has identified Jesus Christ as the head of all Creation, the sole holder of all power and authority and the revealed image of God. Jesus the Christ is truly the fulfillment of the Psalmist's messianic hope and affirmation as Jesus according to the Colossians is the fulfillment of God's revelation, the God revealed in human form. The risen Christ has something to tell us, that God was in Him and that all humanity can find its meaning, purpose and dignity in Him.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

According to the apostolic testimony, Jesus Christ is the fullest expression of who God is for us. The law and the prophets of the Jewish Scriptures testify to this truth but in Jesus Christ this testimony has become flesh and blood. The doctrine of God's becoming human in the person of Jesus is the fountainhead of Christian doctrine. The conviction that God is holy and eternal has been revealed to all faith-communities. It has also been revealed to them that God is just and merciful. The unique Christian witness is that which has been revealed in Jesus: that the holy and eternal God took on a real human existence, lived and died for the salvation of the world and the whole creation.

This testimony separates the story of Jesus from all human conceptions about God. Knowledge of Jesus' life and work on earth provides a sufficient knowledge of God. It also discloses to the believer God's design and goal of creation. The question as to how human beings should live and relate to one another and in relation to the natural environment finds answer in the way that Jesus lived. Knowing Jesus' destiny as it was fulfilled by his resurrection and elevation to God's very glory holds the key to understanding what awaits us after death and at history's final destination.

That God is there-for-us has the same sense of a child's truth that parents exist in order to be there for children. The conventional theological line is that humans are created for God's glory, meaning that being human is there-for-God. The truth of God's descent for our salvation puts Christian theology's feet back on the ground rather than its head. This reversal of role is not new but actually based on the classical doctrine of the incarnation (Athanasius' *Cur deus homo?* Why God became human?), which says that God came down from glory in order that we may be raised to glory. In other words, God became that we might become. The divine self-reduction was graphically demonstrated as Jesus passively submitted himself to total humiliation and defeat by human powers. How salvation is wrought via this incomprehensible divine act has been a subject of endless theological speculations. But the "how" is not the point. What is certain is what God did to Godself for our sake, which revealed God's immeasurable love for us.

I. Objectives

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

1. affirm that God is for us through the coming of Jesus
2. describe Christ in relation to God, to us and the whole creation;
3. discuss the attributes of Jesus Christ to prove his supremacy; and
4. share how they trust Christ in all areas of their lives.

II. Concept: Jesus Christ is the expression of who God is for us.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), hymnal, activity sheet

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

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "God of wisdom, we come as we are learners of your kingdom to listen to your instructions. Guide our teacher and guide each and one of us to come to the full knowledge of who you are and what you are, what you are, and what you do for the sake of your beloved people. You are with us through the Holy Spirit who empowers us to live out our faith, especially in this time of lingering challenge for us to be a community of hope not only of the future but today in this very hour. This is our prayer in Christ's name. Amen."
3. Opening song: "The Church that Is Called by God" HFJ #315

B. Getting Ready

Have the adults recall any experience related to being a witness in court. Let them discuss the importance of telling the truth.

C. Learning Time

1. Start the lesson by telling the class that Paul wrote the Letter to the Corinthians to inform them about the attacks against Christ from false teachers and to protect them from their false teachings.
2. Have the class read the biblical references.
3. Discuss how Paul explained that the false teachers in Colossae preached the wrong gospel. He did this by describing Christ's supremacy over us and the whole creation.
 - a. *Christ in relation to God.* Paul describes Christ as "the image of the invisible God" (v.15). This image is not related to his physical appearance but his character and nature. When Adam and Eve were created, they had the image of God (God's character and nature). However, when they committed a grave mistake against God, their whole image was marred with sin. There is only one whose character and nature of God can resolve humanity's fall. Only Christ who is the image of the invisible God can reveal God's glory and save human beings from the certainty of death. Jesus Christ came to us to fulfill God's purpose for His glory and the salvation of humanity. The truth of God's descent for our salvation puts Christian theology's feet back on the ground rather than its head. This reversal of role is not new but actually based on the classical doctrine of the incarnation, which says that God came down from glory in order that we may be raised to glory. In other words, God became that we might become.
 - b. *Christ in relation to creation.* To contradict the false teachers, Paul discussed another attribute of Christ as "the firstborn of all creation" (v.15). What Paul meant was that Jesus was not created, In fact, he added, "All things have been

created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together." (vv.16-17). His being firstborn means supremacy over everything created. According to the apostolic testimony, Jesus Christ is the fullest expression of who God is for us.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Encourage the class to share their thoughts and interpretations of the texts.

1. The false teachers in Colossae seemed to teach that Jesus is not enough for humankind's salvation, to which Paul assures the Colossians of the sufficiency of Christ as God's image and only begotten son.
 - a. Why do people fashion God after our own thoughts and desires?
 - b. How can our knowledge of Jesus Christ keep our view of God in check?
2. Paul emphasizes the authority and dominion of Christ over all "thrones and principalities" in heaven and on earth.
 - a. How can this knowledge sustain us in our life's journey?
 - b. How can the certainty of Christ's supremacy bring peace in our hearts and enable us to exult Christ always?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "What did Jesus Christ do to express who God is for us?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Ask the class to complete the table. Discuss their answers and ask them to share the reasons for their choices.

Areas in life that I can completely
surrender to Christ

Areas in life that I cannot completely
surrender to Christ

2. Ask the class how they can share these thoughts to others. Let them list the persons they would like to reach out.
 - a. At home
 - b. In the place of work
 - c. In the church

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "The Church that Is Called by God" HFJ #315
3. Closing prayer: "Father, you have shown us the way how to love ourselves to be able to love others. Help us become more loving and caring people for others, especially those whose rights are abused by saying no to injustice that make others hurting. In Christ' name we pray. Amen."

May 6, 2018

Sixth Sunday after Resurrection

Glorification of the Crucified Messiah

Old Testament: Isaiah 52:13 (NRSV)

The Suffering Servant

¹³See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.

New Testament: Acts 1:6-11 (NRSV)

The Ascension of Jesus

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' ⁷He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'

General Concept: Jesus' ascension has opened up our own destiny to share in his glory.

Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School

Adult: **Jesus' ascension has opened up our own destiny to share in his glory.**

Exegesis of the Biblical References

The Hebrew word Messiah is referring to the anointed one of God whose main concern is to fulfill the liberating task assigned to him by God. Around 540 BCE, the Israelites in Babylon were nearing the end of their exile as the once mighty Babylonian empire begins to collapse following a series of defeats in the hands of the rising Persian Empire under the mighty king Cyrus. An atmosphere of uncertainty is beginning to cause confusion and demoralization even among the exiles. But then, an unknown prophet from among the exiles whom scholars could only identify as Deutero- or Second Isaiah since his oracles became part of the book of the prophet Isaiah, rose to the occasion and began to speak words of hope, comfort and restoration to his fellow exiles.

His collection of oracles of hope and salvation are located in chapters 40-55 of Isaiah and he is widely considered as truly a follower of the continuing Isaiah prophetic tradition wanting to pursue and reinterpret for his own generation the teachings of the prophet who proclaimed God's words of judgment some 160 years earlier in Jerusalem. Most of the oracles of Deutero-Isaiah are delivered in beautiful, lyrical poetry-song and the prophet wrote four special compositions referring to the servant of the Lord and one of his poetic compositions is known as the Song of the Suffering Servant in Is. 52:13-53:12 with which our text is closely connected.

Being a Jew himself the writer of Second Isaiah is quite knowledgeable in the Jewish cultic worship traditions and one of them is the sacrifice of animals or holocaust for the forgiveness of the sins of the Jewish believers. It may be seen as expressive of a distinct understanding of divine forgiveness. In Second Isaiah's view, however animal sacrifice is not actually effective in the forgiveness of sins since people may just rely only on this ritual act

as a purely mechanical means of seeking forgiveness devoid of real sincerity. Instead, he introduced the image of the suffering servant offering himself as an innocent sacrifice for the sins of the many as the most effective means given by God for the forgiveness of not only the Jewish community but also of all people. Here, the suffering of God's servant is clearly not to be seen as punishment for sin as traditionally understood by the Jews, but the suffering of the innocent servant is now revealed as a part of the divine plan towards forgiveness and reconciliation of the whole world to God the redeemer and reconciler.

This image of a suffering, innocent, non-resisting, totally submissive servant has become definitive for the kind of ministry and mission that Jesus would then carry out. In contrast to popular understanding, this image defined how Jesus as messiah is to be understood later on and how his mission is to be carried out. The image of this suffering servant became the template by which Jesus as the messiah is to be understood by his followers.

The time came when people from different parts of Judah and Jerusalem heard a voice in the wilderness near the Jordan River. The voice touched the hearts of many people as it called for repentance and baptism in the river Jordan. John was initially suspected as the Messiah but he denied it, proclaiming that he is only preparing the way of the Lord who is coming. When Jesus appeared on the scene of the Jordan River, John the baptizer was so amazed and immediately he announced that Jesus is truly the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Around 33 CE, Jesus began his ministry and preached about the kingdom of God. In faithfully doing so, he disturbed the comfort zone of the religious leaders of his time as well as the Roman authorities. It became inevitable that he was arrested, condemned as a rebel, tortured and crucified but on the third day he rose from the dead. His followers were then reminded of what Jesus himself said to them earlier that his suffering is for the reconciliation and forgiveness of the sins of many people.

Almost 577 years after the Song of the Suffering Servant was composed by the writer of Second Isaiah, it found its proper place and meaning in the life and mission of Jesus Christ. And before the sight of his disciples Jesus ascended right toward heaven but he assured them not to be worried because God will enable them to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Jesus also instructed his disciples before his ascension to be his witnesses not only in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, but also to the ends of the earth. Here, the disciples are already witnessing Jesus' own glorification, his own complete vindication for his total submission and faithfulness to his mission as the messiah sent by God. Now Jesus is offering his disciples the opportunity to share in this glorious moment, to experience also the kind of glory and vindication accorded to all those who faithfully follow and carry out the mission of Jesus.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

Jesus' ascension to heaven is the sequel of his resurrection in which his glorified body does not remain in the old creation which is subject to corruption and decay (Romans 8:19-23). One man's victory over a whole establishment of evil – the political and spiritual dominion of the evil Roman Empire – signals a cosmic event in which creation, too, will be liberated from its subjection to corruption and decay. This refers to the ultimate overcoming of the great divide between heaven and earth, between immortality and mortality, between God and creation. In the Book of Revelation, this is depicted as heaven coming down to earth as God will make earth his very dwelling (Rev. 21:3). It is a poetic rendition of the Christian vision of what awaits the new life in Christ – a new creation, a new heaven and a new earth.

Central to the Christian understanding of reality is that the incarnation of the Son of God has activated God's original design to heal creation's alienation from the Creator as a result

of sin. The dialectic of salvation is this: what the incarnate Son accomplished on earth is certified in heaven such that an earthly event translates into a cosmic event. The earthly arena consists of the political and spiritual dimensions which permeate one another. Thus, Jesus' confrontation with the forces of the Empire was also a cosmic confrontation between God and the devil, and his moral and spiritual victory was meant to yield political dividends and vice-versa. Consequently, the struggle for political justice is at the same time a struggle in the spiritual realm. In the end, God's justice would translate into earthly justice – the kingdom of God wherein God's will in heaven would also be done on earth (the Lord's Prayer), and a new social order would correspond to the new being in Christ. And God would accomplish a full-dimension reconciliation of creation to one's self. Despite all signs today that point to humanity's bitter end, the Christian faith is sustained by the hope that God is at work to reverse history's march to creation's total destruction. This assurance should not make the church complacent, for it is called to participate in this work.

I. Objectives

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

1. explain how the OT text is fulfilled in the ascension event in the NT;
2. discuss the implications of Jesus' ascension to God's people;
3. point to the fact that in Jesus' ascension, believers can fulfill their destiny to share in God's glory, and
4. make commitments to do what is right in accordance to God's will as one awaits the fulfillment of one's destiny to share in God's glory.

II. Concept: Jesus' ascension has opened up our own destiny to share in his glory.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), hymnal, activity sheet, song chart, manila papers and pentel pens.

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: Sustainer God, we know you are here through the empowering Holy Spirit to teach us the way, the truth and the life. As we come today to learn new revelations from your word, may we be in tune with your liberating will and purpose for all creation. Adults as we are we have tendencies to disregard the value of humility and obedience and how they build communities and nations. We humbly pray in Christ's name. Amen.
3. Opening song: "The Hands of God" HFJ # 295

B. Getting Ready

Tell the class to share their experiences on how they help their children or friends from overcoming feelings of abandonment or depression.

C. Learning Time

1. As a background, read aloud Philippians 2:5-9. After reading it, say: Jesus submitted himself to the father's will all his life, hence, God glorified him and he ascended to heaven victoriously.
2. Ask the learners to read silently Isaiah 52:13 and responsibly Acts 1:6-11. Discuss them and encourage the class to share their insights.
3. Point out that Jesus' ascension to heaven is the sequel of his resurrection in which his glorified body does not remain in the old creation which is subject to corruption

and decay (Romans 8:19-23). One man's victory over a whole establishment of evil - the political and spiritual dominion of the evil Roman Empire - signals a cosmic event in which creation, too, will be liberated from its subjection to corruption and decay. Jesus completely submitted himself to God in humble obedience to God's will. Therefore, God glorified him.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Ask these questions:

1. How would you relate Isaiah 52:13 to the ascension event in Acts 1:6-11?
2. Do you fully agree that Isaiah 52:13 is fulfilled in the ascension event in Acts 1:6-11? Why?
3. What is the implication of Jesus' ascension to God's people?
4. What does it mean for you when we say, "In Jesus' ascension, believers can fulfil their destiny to share in God's glory?"

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "What practicable moves we can do to fulfil our destiny to share in God's glory?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Challenge the learners to write one or two commitment to do what is right in accordance to God's will as one awaits the fulfilment of one's destiny to share in God's glory. Write on manila paper before the following heading: MY COMMITMENT TO SHARE IN GOD'S GLORY. Ask the learners to read the following sample commitment:

We are destined to share in God's glory, by doing what is right

We commit ourselves anew to obey God like Jesus Christ who lived in obedience to God's will and purpose

We failed to radiate God's glory in lives before, but today and the rest of our lives, we live to do what is right and be merciful and just in dealing with our neighbors and to all God's creation.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "The Hands of God" HFJ # 295
3. Closing prayer: "God our parent, help us to live out what we have just affirmed. Give us the courage to be firm and still in our witness of your glory. Holy Spirit, our counselor and teacher; help us remember our destiny-to share in God's glory. And so in the here and now, we continue to become channels of your mercy, justice and love. Not only that, here and now, we say "NO!" to all forces of evil that are against our will and purpose for the whole world which you love so dearly. We pray in the precious name of Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen."

May 13, 2018

Seventh Sunday after Resurrection/Mother's Day Sunday

Mothering as a Messianic Function

Old Testament: 1 Samuel 1:9-20 (NRSV)

⁹ After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose and presented herself before the LORD. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. ¹⁰She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD, and wept bitterly.

¹¹She made this vow: 'O LORD of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a Nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head.' ¹²As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. ¹³Hannah was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she was drunk. ¹⁴So Eli said to her, 'How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Put away your wine.' ¹⁵But Hannah answered, 'No, my lord, I am a woman deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. ¹⁶Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time.' ¹⁷Then Eli answered, 'Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him.' ¹⁸And she said, 'Let your servant find favor in your sight.' Then the woman went to her quarters, ate and drank with her husband, and her countenance was sad no longer. ¹⁹They rose early in the morning and worshipped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. Elkanah knew his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. ²⁰In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, 'I have asked him of the LORD.'

New Testament: Matthew 23:37 (NRSV)

The Lament over Jerusalem

³⁷ 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

General Concept: Mothering is a way of witnessing to God.

Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School

Adult: **Mothering is a way of witnessing to God.**

Exegesis of the Biblical References

In the biblical drama, women are said to be designed to give birth and those who cannot do so are considered cursed or not blessed by God. To give birth was considered as a sign of God's blessing. According to the story in our text, there was a man from the tribe of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah. He had two wives; Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children but Hannah had no children. Though Hannah had no children her husband loved Hannah more compared to Peninnah.

Every year the family of Elkanah would go to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice to the Lord in accordance with the Mosaic Law. According to their common belief and practice,

Peninnah knew that Yahweh was pleased with her and she thanked God for giving her children. After they worshipped and offered their yearly sacrifice, the family of Elkanah would eat together. Peninnah would insult Hannah. The happy family fellowship over food was affected by the weeping and walk-out of Hannah. Peninnah was also actually in pain because her husband loved Hannah more than her. Elkanah would assure Hannah, "Why do you weep? And why do you not eat? Am I not more to you than ten sons?" Hannah had expressed her bitterness before God at Shiloh to the extent that even Eli the high priest suspected her of being drunk. She then made a bargain with Yahweh, that if Yahweh would give her a son, she will offer him to serve Yahweh all of his life and no razor shall touch his head. Eventually Hannah gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, who later became a prophet and the last judge of Israel's tribal confederacy.

In the Gospel of Matthew, when Jesus was near the City of Jerusalem he lamented the historic and bloody end of prophets in Jerusalem. He used the metaphor of a hen in gathering her chickens under her wings as a kind of protection against any dangerous threat. But as far as Jesus is concerned, Jerusalem has not learned much throughout her historical experience. Jesus expressed his own feelings and concerns as he uses the lesson that can be learned from what the hen regularly does to her chicks. For Jesus, mothering is a kind of sacrifice. A sacrifice that needs compassion and dedication. A sacrifice of even life itself if it is needed for the protection of the beloved. God in Jesus Christ proved His love even in a very critical situation.

Peninnah out of her love for her children and her right in accordance with common belief and practices, confronted and even insulted her rival Hannah before the eyes of her husband. Peninnah may just have been asserting her rights and fighting in behalf of the rights of her own children. The hen too has that readiness to fight in order to protect the brood. It is difficult to witness faithfully to God! There are a lot of challenges that may shake us to the core of our being. But there will always be the need for compassionate and caring love to endure the pain and even to give a life which only a mother can give. Mothering is a metaphor for faithfully bearing witness before our God even in the face of enormous challenges knowing that the God we serve is a God who will also fight for us and care for us in a manner only a mother can truly understand and approximate.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

Mothering and fathering represent the two-sided nature of caring for a young child. It has been used as a metaphor for God's care. However, it is inevitable that the patriarchal culture of the biblical times has determined the one-sided dominance of the paternal role especially when it is employed in religious language. Actual experience, however, shows that even in patriarchal cultures mothers play a much greater role in the raising of children and even when they are grown up. This is borne out in the stories of Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Jesus, and others.

Recent studies on the changing nature of the family also indicate that mothering and fathering are not necessarily the respective roles of mothers or fathers. Each may be doing both roles together with the other partner. They represent two complementary ways of providing children the full extent of parental care. This has become an accepted reality to progressive couples to the point that gender-based roles are getting diffused and overlapped.

The new consciousness in family relationships has exerted a game-changing impact on theological articulation. But this early shift is fraught with danger owing to the fact that the gender discourse has yet to complete its circle. On the other hand, by its very nature theological articulation is unable to keep up with the pace of cultural developments. But some very preliminary statements can be made.

Mothering is being recognized as a more apt metaphor for the tenderness of God's love

and compassion. On the other hand, the severity of God's justice and rule appears more as a function of a fathering figure. And yet, God's forgiving love is shown by the father of the lost son in Jesus' parable. There is also ambivalence in describing the role of the shepherd who risks danger to find one lost sheep. In other words, there is no hard and fast rule for attributing specific actions of God to either male or female. Although distinct from each other, the mothering and fathering roles complement to offer a fuller view of how God relates to us.

If we take the current progressive concept of the mothering-fathering distinction, Jesus was a male person who demonstrated a stronger mothering than fathering instinct. He was tender and welcoming to the vulnerable and marginalized, like women and children. But at certain moments he was harsh on the scribes and Pharisees and even to his disciples. What is clear is that in the totality of his life and work, he demonstrated God's mothering care underlying the divine-human relationship.

I. Objectives

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

1. describe how God answered Hannah's desire to be a mother
2. explain the metaphor of the hen when Jesus lamented over Jerusalem
3. talk and compare the mothering or fathering ways of Jesus to show God's love for us
4. share one's experience in witnessing to God by performing either mothering or fathering roles to others in need

II. Concept: Mothering is a way of witnessing to God.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), hymnal, activity sheet, song chart, manila papers and pentel pens

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: Dear God, we are parents in one way or the other. We have known your mothering-fathering love in Jesus Christ who gave his life so we may live. We gather today to remember as well the joys and pains of mothering-fathering. Be with us once more in this moment of learning and reflecting. In Christ' name we pray. Amen.
3. Opening song: "I Am Yours, O Lord" HFJ # 283

B. Getting Ready

Allow a period for learners to recall fathering-mothering experiences. Ask: "Which mothering or fathering experience do you like best?"

C. Learning Time

1. Have the learners read individually the first reading 1 Samuel 1:9-20.
2. Share insights from the Exegesis of the Biblical References.
3. Facilitate the learners in doing the Somebody... Wanted... But... So... activity. Discuss the character, goal, conflict, and resolution with the class as you fill in the SWBS chart on a manila paper.

SWBS			
Somebody	Wanted to	But	So

4. Read aloud the second reading Matthew 23:37. Point out that Matthew 23:37 tells about Jesus' lamentation of the historic and bloody end of prophets in Jerusalem. He uses the metaphor of a hen in gathering her chickens under her wings as a kind of protection against any dangerous threat. But as far as Jesus is concerned Jerusalem has not learned much throughout her historical experience.

Jesus expresses his own feelings and concerns as he uses the lesson that can be learned from what the hen regularly does to her chicks. For Jesus' mothering is a kind of sacrifice, a sacrifice that needs compassion and dedication and even life itself if it is needed for the protection of the beloved. God in Jesus Christ proved His love even in a very critical situation.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Ask these questions to the learners:

1. How did God answer Hannah's desire to be a mother?
2. What conclusion can you draw from God's answer to Hannah's desire to be a mother?
3. What is the meaning of the metaphor of the hen that Jesus used when he lamented over Jerusalem?
4. What is the significance of the mothering function of Jesus?
5. Can you share an experience in witnessing to God by performing either mothering or fathering roles to others in need? Please describe.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "In what way does mothering become a witness to God?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Talk about and compare the mothering or fathering ways of Jesus to show God's love for us.
2. Ask the learners to share an experience in witnessing to God by performing either mothering or fathering roles to others in need.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "I Am Yours, O Lord" (HFJ # 283)
3. Closing prayer: Ask each learner to say a short prayer of commitment to witness to God's love as they continue to perform mother-fathering roles to their loved ones and neighbors.