

Calendar of Weekly Lesson Topics on the UCCP Statement of Faith

WE BELIEVE

In one God: Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, who provides order, purpose, meaning and fulfillment to all creation.

Trinity Sunday

First Sunday after Pentecost

May 27, 2018

LESSON 1: WE BELIEVE IN ONE GOD: CREATOR, REDEEMER AND SUSTAINER

General Concept: We believe in one God who is the source of all life, always hears and responds to cries for redemption, and is always with us; we respond by giving of our whole self to our One God.

NKP	YE	OE	Y	A
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is one God. • God gives life. • God helps at all times. • We give thanks to God for our life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is one God. • God is the source of life. • God helps at all times. • We give thanks to God for our life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is one God who is the source of all life. • God hears us when we ask for help. • God is always with us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe in one God, the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. • God is the source of all life, hears and responds when we cry for help, and is always with us. • We give our life to our One God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe in one God, the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. • God is the source of all life, hears and responds to cries for redemption, and is always with us. • We respond by giving of our whole self to our One God.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell that there is one God. • Affirm that God gives life. • Mention ways of how God helps us. • Say a prayer of thanks to God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept that God is one. • Thank God for being the source of life. • Express their thoughts on how God helps people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share their understanding about our One God, the source of all life. • Relate how they experience God’s help. • Write their personal confession of faith in our One God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State that there is one God, the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. • Declare that our God hears and responds to cries for redemption and is always with us. • Express ways by which one gives of oneself to God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze how God responds to the people’s cry for redemption from domination and slavery. • Express their perception of our One God as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. • Make a commitment to respond and to actively participate in the ministries God calls us to be part of.
<i>Biblical References</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 3:1-14; Deuteronomy 6:4; John 3:16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 3:1-14; Deuteronomy 6:4; John 3:16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 3: 13-14; Isaiah 6:3, 8; John 3:13-17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 3:7; Isaiah 6:1-8; John 3:1-17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 3: 1-14; Isaiah 6:1-8; John 3:1-17

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 29; Romans 8:12-17; John 3:1-17

Biblical Background

As a Church, we believe in a God who creates life, redeems life and sustains life. “The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.” Deuteronomy 6:4, opens the *Shema*, the prayer that urges the people to ‘hear or listen’ to God’s commandments and emphasizes that people are to worship and love only God—the one God who helped them out of Egypt and who made a covenant with them. Obeying God’s statutes and ordinances and living a life of faithfulness and thanksgiving is the expected response from the people.

In Exodus 3:1-14, we read that God, through Moses, assured the Hebrews that God heard them, when they cried for help. God is a God who helps. God has seen the affliction of the people and resolved to rescue them. God instructed Moses to lead them out of Egypt and bring

them into a land where they can live freely and abundantly. This story pictures God as the One who helps and will never turn away when the people cry and ask for help. Truly, God desires liberty for God’s chosen people.

Isaiah 6:1-8 depicts the prophet’s vision of God in the Holy Temple. He is a witness to the heavenly council’s request to represent them and bring their message to the people. Isaiah properly responds, “Here am I; send me!” This text vividly describes the glory and power of God.

John 3:1-17 opens with an affirmation that indeed Jesus comes from God. The text talks about a discussion on the Kingdom of God. In an enigmatic manner, Jesus explains that being in the Kingdom of God means participating in the work of God through Jesus Christ and accepting God’s grace. The text ends with the declaration that God sent God’s Son in order that the world will be saved and receive eternal life.

Second Sunday after Pentecost
June 3, 2018

LESSON 2: GOD OUR CREATOR

General Concept: God created the whole universe and instituted systems to benefit human beings and the rest of creation.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God made the world. • God made me and you. • God made rules that help us to be good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God made the universe. • God made human beings. • God gave rules that help us to be good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God created the whole universe. • God created human beings. • God gave commandments to benefit human beings and the rest of creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God created the whole universe and it was good. • God gave laws to benefit human beings and the rest of creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God created the whole universe and it was good. • God instituted laws to benefit human beings and the rest of creation.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name the things that God created. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the things God has created. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how God created the whole universe as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe God as our Creator. • Elaborate the details of how God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate how they think God’s creation is good.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept and follow rules in order to be good. • Express thanks for God’s creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain what commandments and rules are for. • Express thanks and praise to God, our Creator. 	<p>narrated in the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write down the God-given commandments mentioned in the text. • Generate ideas on how they can follow the commandments. • Express thanks and praise to God, our Creator. 	<p>created the universe as narrated in the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the benefits of God’s laws to human beings and the rest of creation. • Demonstrate ways of protecting God’s creation. • Resolve to be involved in environmental advocacies promoting the welfare and protection of all God’s creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express their reflection on the importance of God’s instituted laws in bringing about order in the whole of God’s creation. • List down ways of declaring to others the goodness of God’s creation and the necessity of upholding the goodness and integrity of God’s creation.
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 1:1-27; Deuteronomy 5:12-15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 1:1-27; Deuteronomy 5:12-15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 1:1-27; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Psalm 139:1-10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 1:1-27; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Psalm 139:1-10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Psalm 139:1-10

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20); Psalm 81:1-10; 2 Corinthians 4:5-12; Mark 2:23-3:6

Biblical Background

Genesis means “beginning”. In the beginning, God. God spoke and thus created. God is the Creator of all that is. Genesis 1:1-27 shows that creation is a process of order and putting in place systems that humanity must follow in order that they may benefit and so that creation can thrive. God made light: the sun and all the stars and the moon. God created the waters, land and sky, all kinds of plants, all kinds of animals, including the fishes and birds. God made human beings in God’s image, both male and female.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15 is an exhortation to observe the Sabbath and allow time for rest. Just as God rested, so everyone must rest, especially those who labor hard. Sabbath also represents a day of liberation from oppressive structures, which the Hebrews experienced in their journey from being slaves with no rest in Egypt until they entered the Promised Land of rest and bounty. This day is set aside as holy, being offered back to God, and is instituted so that all of us may participate in God’s gift of rest. God created us and gave laws to govern us. God the Creator sets the laws and commissioned humankind to live by them.

Psalm 139:1-10 opens one of the most beautiful, and one of the most difficult, psalms in the Hebrew Bible. It talks about how God completely and intimately knows the psalmist from the very beginning of life and in all aspects of life. The psalmist cannot hide from God, the psalmist can only seek peace with God. Many are prone to think that we can only encounter God in church and in other so called “holy places.” This passage debunks this erroneous concept. God is Creator and is everywhere, even in the farthest reaches of the created order.

Third Sunday after Pentecost
June 10, 2018

LESSON 3: GOD OUR REDEEMER

General Concept: God redeems and saves; we are called to participate in God’s work of redemption and salvation.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is my friend. • God helps. • I help. • We help each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is our friend. • God comforts and helps us when we are in trouble. • God wants us to help those who are in trouble. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is our friend. • God, through our family and friends, comforts us when we have problems. • God wants us to help those who have problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is our companion. • God redeems and saves. • God wants us to help those who are in need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is our constant companion. • God redeems and saves. • God wants us to participate in God’s work of redemption and salvation.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell how God helps and is a friend. • Point out similarities between God’s help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that God is their friend. • Identify situations in the Bible where 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share their understanding of our One God, our Redeemer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know and understand why God redeems and saves us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruminates/reflect on why God makes God’s presence felt

<p>and our family's help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate ways of helping others. • Express thanks to God for helping us. 	<p>people needed God's help</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell of ways they can help those who are in trouble. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate how they have experienced God's help when they asked for it • Write their personal confession of faith in God our Redeemer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become aware that God is our companion in saving the needy. • Make resolutions on how to help those who are in need. 	<p>in all of life's situations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize ways by which God strengthens persons especially in times of despair and degradation. • Unite in the biblical understanding of redemption. • Profess approaches by which every person can be a part of God's redemptive act.
<i>Biblical References</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 3:7-8; 6:5-7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 3:7-8; 6:5-7; Psalm 138; Luke 1:68 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus 3:7-8; 6:5-7; Psalm 138; Luke 1:68 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 138; Luke 1:68 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 138; Luke 1:68

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Psalm 130; Psalm 138; 1 Samuel 8:4-11, (12-15), 16-20, (11:14-15); Genesis 3:8-15; 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-35

Biblical Background

Exodus 3:7-8 and 6:5-7 narrates how God saw the sufferings of the Israelites and heard them when they cried for help. God could not endure listening to the cries of a long-enslaved and oppressed people and resolved to rescue them. These texts are part of the dialogue between God and Moses. God has called Moses to perform the task of liberating the people from their Egyptian taskmasters and to bring them into the land promised by God: a fertile land full of God's blessings, a land flowing with milk and honey. Moses, at first, was hesitant seeing the task ahead. But with God's assurance of divine help, Moses accepted the task to participate in God's work of redemption and salvation.

Psalm 138 is a song of praise and thanksgiving for God's deliverance, continued goodness, steadfast love and abiding solidarity. This chapter might have been written after the Babylonian exile when the people were allowed to return to their homeland. Once again, God has heard the cries of the people and redeemed them.

Luke 1:68 forms part of Zechariah’s song of praise. God has redeemed God’s people in the past, and there is no stopping God’s liberating acts still to be manifested in the future. It is an affirmation of God’s continuing salvific act experienced by the Israelites long before and which God’s people in this time of the Pax Romana will experience as well. Israel’s life has not been easy being dominated by other nations and them being caught in the tug-of-war between these nations whose interest is to control the world. God is therefore proclaimed by the Lukan author to be a faithful and ever-present help in the life of the people.

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
June 17, 2018

LESSON 4: GOD OUR SUSTAINER

General Concept: God alone gives and sustains life; we are called to be instruments of God's sustaining grace so that all may experience abundant life.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God takes care of me. • I help take care of others. • Others are helped when I take care of them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God takes care of us. • We take care of each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God continues to provide for our needs • We take care of each other’s needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God sustains life • God wants us to be responsible in our life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God intends abundant life for all • We are called to be instruments of God’s sustaining grace
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mention ways of how God takes care of them. • Show ways of caring others. • Express thanks to God for taking care of them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ways their parents and other people care for them • Express thanks to God for taking care of us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify their needs for which God has given provisions. • Write a short story showing God’s provisions in their life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that God is our Sustainer. • Discuss how God sustains life. • Explain why God calls us to be channels of God’s sustaining grace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the Biblical principle of abundant life as intended by God. • Figure out how abundant life could be achieved amid

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express joy in caring for others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relate ways by which they can show care for others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illustrate, through pictures, how they can take care of each other's needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State how God wants us to be responsible in our lives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> scarcity or deprivation. Register their unwavering commitment to be agents of God's sustaining grace.
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I Kings 17:7-16; Psalm 23:1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ezekiel 17:22-24; Mark 4:26-34; II Corinthians 12:7-9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ezekiel 17:22-24; Psalm 92: 1-4; 12-15; 2 Corinthians 12: 7-9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 92: 1-4; 12-15; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 92: 12-15; Ezekiel 17:22-24

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 1 Samuel 15:34 - 16:13; Psalm 20; Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15; Ezekiel 17:22-24; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, (11-13), 14-17; Mark 4:26-34

Biblical Background

I Kings 17:7-16 tells the story of Elijah, the widow of Zarephath and her son in a time of drought and famine. The story exemplifies God's sustaining grace even in times of calamity and want. The widow was about to prepare her and her son's last meal as food supplies were finally running out. A thirsty and hungry Elijah arrives and requests for water and food. Both requests are granted by the widow, despite knowing that what she was about to offer were the last of her provisions for food. Trusting God and the words of assurance of the prophet, she shares of the last that she had. Indeed, those who trust in God and does God's work can be found recipients of God's continuing sustenance.

Psalm 92: 1-4 and 12-15 celebrates God's steadfast love and faithfulness and those who practice righteousness. The righteous will continue to be on the receiving end of the blessings from God, the Sustainer, for as long as they live. The psalm reminds us of our moral duty to care of one another, just as God continues to take care of us.

Ezekiel 17:22-24 tells about God's sustaining grace and faithfulness to God's people despite all odds. The text gives us a picture of a plant planted by God that flourishes and grows strong and mighty and is able to in turn provide shelter, nourishment and sustenance to others. Ezekiel is believed to have lived during the Babylonian exile, the most tragic period of his people's life. His main task was to keep hope alive among his people. Exile is not the end of all things; it is not the last word for God keeps on speaking.

Mark 4:26-34 tells about the kin-dom of God which like seed when scattered on the ground will grow no matter what circumstances there would be. The seed will sprout, grow, bear fruit and again provide shelter and food for others. The message of God’s Kin-dom is that when people continue to do good, they will flourish and thrive in the care and sustaining grace of God and nothing will be able to stop it.

2 Corinthians 5:6-10 tells us that we must always be confident in the Lord. The verses tell about a lesson that Paul learned about the grace of God that continuously sustained him. All he needed to do was to be dependent on that grace.

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
June 24, 2018

LESSON 5: GOD PROVIDES ORDER TO ALL CREATION

General Concept: God has ordered creation so that each created entity is set in its place and obeys God: the stars in the heavens, the seas within its bounds, the clouds in the sky, human beings living in unity.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God made the world beautiful. • God places everything in order. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God made the world beautiful and good • God places everything in order. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God created the world beautiful and good • God places everything in order. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God created the heavens and the earth • God places everything in perfect order. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is a God of order • Each created entity is set in its place and obeys God.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the world that God made • Match the things that God created with their habitat • Express thanks to God for the beautiful creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the right order of how God created according to Genesis 1 • Describe their immediate surrounding • Explain what makes God’s creation beautiful and good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that God created the world beautiful and good • Analyze why God’s creation is beautiful and good • Explain what makes God’s creation beautiful and good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how God created the world • Affirm that God places everything in perfect order • Express one’s role in preserving the unity of all creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the root causes of disorderliness in the world • Elucidate some of the ways by which God brings orderliness in situations of chaos

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enumerate approaches of safeguarding the order of God's creation
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis 1:1 – 2:3; Psalm 107:29; Psalm 133 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job 38:1-11; Psalm 107:29 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 133; Mark 4:35-41 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 133; Mark 4:35-41

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 1 Samuel 17: (1a, 4-11, 19-23), 32-49; Psalm 9:9-20; Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32; Psalm 133; Job 38:1-11; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41

Biblical Background

Genesis 1:1 – 2:3, the first chapter of the whole Bible, talks about the whole of God's creation and how God put everything in order. In the beginning there was chaos, but when God spoke, God created and everything was in order. Creation, in its chronological and picturesque order, declares the beauty of all things and affirms life.

Job 38:1-11 records the dialogue between God and Job. This dialogue happened because of Job's murmuring and complaint. God wants Job to realize that he has no reason to complain about life and his situation for God is in control, just as the natural world is under God's power. God started questioning Job with a poetic description of God's work in creating the world; something that God did long ago before Job or any other human being was born. Surely, Job should put his trust in God. The Creator of the universe cares for the whole universe; God cares for him too.

Psalm 107:29 states how God stills the storm and calms the waves. The sea was a symbol of chaos, dangerous force and hostility in Biblical times. Rendering God as having control over the sea shows that indeed God is all-powerful and to whom all creation must give obeisance.

Psalm 133 sings about the beauty of living in peace and harmony. Oil denotes peace, health and joy. Dew symbolizes blessings. Hermon is a very high mountain that reaches to the sky and is perpetually snow-capped, providing water to all the communities surrounding it. Indeed, all these signify creation that is in the right order.

Mark 4:35-41 is an affirmation that God through Jesus Christ is in control of all creation. Again, in Jewish mentality, the sea is a daily reminder of chaos. It is seen as a force of evil. This evil force can only be challenged and dispelled by the power of God. In commanding the stormy sea to be quiet and still, Jesus affirms his divine power over the forces of evil.

LESSON 6: GOD PROVIDES PURPOSE FOR ALL CREATION

General Concept: Responsible stewardship and equitable distribution of the world's resources is God's purpose for creation.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I take care of my things. • I share what I have. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God wants us to take care of our surroundings. • God wants us to share what we have. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God wants us to take care of our environment. • God wants us to share fairly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God wants us to be responsible stewards of God's creation. • Equitable distribution is sharing according to each one's needs. • God intends for the world's resources to be distributed equitably. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God wants us to be responsible stewards of God's creation. • Equitable distribution is sharing according to each one's needs. • God intends for the world's resources to be distributed equitably.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mention ways of caring for things • Have started to practice the habit of caring for things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the result of taking more than what we need • Express gratitude to God for letting human beings use creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record verses in the Bible regarding care for the environment • Write and design slogans calling for environmental protection and care • Cite ways on how they can practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the meaning of responsible stewardship and equitable sharing • List down ways of how to be responsible steward of God's creation • Share ways of how to respond to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the existing circumstances of God's creation and state the factors affecting these • Affirm that God intends for the world's resources to be distributed equitably

		fair share in everything they do	needs of other people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine basic and vital programs or ministries of the church and community that support the crusade towards equitable distribution of the world's resources
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acts 2:43-47 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exodus 16:1-21; 2 Corinthians 8:7-15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exodus 16:12-22; 2 Corinthians 8:10-15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exodus 16:1-21; 2 Corinthians 8:7-15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Corinthians 8:7-15

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27; Psalm 130; 2 Corinthians 8:7-15; Mark 5:21-43

Biblical Background

Exodus 16:1-22. The word “manna” literally means “what is it?” This reflects the first reaction of the Israelites when they first collected the food. They are to gather them every day except on the Sabbath. For 40 years, they have to rely on this food supplied from heaven. This also clearly demonstrates the enforced dependence of the people on God in order to survive. The provision of manna made it impossible for greed: it cannot be hoarded and was distributed with precise equity. Although some gathered much and some little, those who gathered much did not have an excess while, those who gathered less did not lack. The quail migrates across the Sinai Peninsula. They fly in great flocks between Europe and Arabia. Due to their long flight, the quail being so exhausted will roost to the ground or in low bushes at night. This makes it easier to capture them. Along with the manna, the quail was made available for the Israelites during their sojourn in the wilderness. God has provided and so now humanity must take on its duty of responsible stewardship and equitable distribution.

Acts 2:43-47 gives a profile of the early believers. They easily grew in number which led to the astounding spread of the early church. They held their possessions in common, they ate and prayed together, they took care of each other, they lived in harmony as a community, and were truly in solidarity one with each other. They exemplified God’s call for humanity to be responsible stewards and to share equitably of God-given resources.

2 Corinthians 8:7-15 is part of a letter of appeal for funds Paul wrote to the Corinthian church. The collection was for the poor, starving and persecuted community in Jerusalem. The believers there were persecuted by the Roman Empire and the Jewish authorities that they had to go underground. Many of them had been killed. Paul urged the Corinthians to reach out to those in need and to practice their Christian obligation and privilege of sharing. Paul also put forth the concept of “fair balance” (verses 13-15). The Corinthian church was rich and had

the capacity to help while the Jerusalem church was needy and suffering. This call of Paul advocates true partnership, equality and stewardship.

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

July 8, 2018

LESSON 7: GOD GIVES MEANING TO ALL CREATION

General Concept: Each created being has integrity and worth; our role is to do good and to uphold the worth and integrity of creation.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am special. • I belong. • I do good. • I help take care of plants and animals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are all special. • We belong to each other. • We do good. • We help protect the environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each created being is special. • All created beings are interrelated. • Each one of us must do good. • We help protect and respect the environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each created being has integrity and worth. • All created beings are interconnected and interrelated. • Our role is to do good. • We uphold the worth and integrity of creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each created being has integrity and worth. • All created beings are interconnected and interrelated. • Our role is to do good. • We uphold the worth and integrity of creation.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that each one is a special child of God • Realize that we belong to one another • Mention acts of goodness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish what makes them special • See how we are all connected to each other • Show their concern for the protection of environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State, in own words, how God created each being special • Analyze how all created beings are interrelated • Plan on how they can do good and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm the greatness of God as manifested in creation • Discuss that all created beings are interconnected and interrelated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and assert the role of persons in upholding the integrity of God’s creation • Affirm the necessity of celebrating each person’s uniqueness and potential for a

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have demonstrated acts of goodness to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express thanksgiving to God for being made special 	<p>protect the whole of creation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate actions that show caring for all creation • Make a commitment towards upholding the worth and integrity of creation • 	<p>more harmonious relationship and journey towards a transformed community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declare commitment to take part in church and community ministries in upholding the worth and integrity of God's creation
<i>Biblical References</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 139:14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ephesians 2:10a; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ezekiel 2:1-2; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Ephesians 2:10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ezekiel 2:1-5; Ephesians 2:10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ezekiel 2:1-5

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10; Psalm 48; Psalm 123; Ezekiel 2:1-5; 2 Corinthians 12:2-10; Mark 6:1-13

Biblical Background

1 Samuel 16:1-13 tells about the anointing of David by the prophet Samuel as king over Israel. God chose Samuel. The people were not consulted this time; unlike with Saul who was the people's choice. Indeed, David had inherent gifts and was worthy to become king. He was sensitive and wise; he was a brave warrior; and he had faith in God. Just like every created being, he has intrinsic integrity and worth; and he exemplified good leadership and mostly upheld what was right during his reign.

Ezekiel 2:1-5 begins the story of the prophet's call and commissioning. God empowers Ezekiel to be God's voice. He is sent to the people of Israel, who in this passage is described as rebellious, impudent and stubborn. These descriptions remind us of the frailty of humanity. Despite this, God continues to call them and invites them to participate in the work of God of and upholding God's order. The people can respond and change the course of their lives. Even if they are defiant, they are not without hope and God gives them a second chance at obeying and following the purpose of God.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 contains an oracle or piece of truth that the grace of God is sufficient. Paul is empowered in that Christ's power indwelt in him. Despite his weaknesses, he was made strong. God also finds strength in each one of, and when there are points of weakness, God will likewise give us strength to continue to do God's will.

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

July 15, 2018

LESSON 8: GOD GIVES FULFILLMENT TO ALL CREATION

General Concept: In God, all creation finds fulfillment, abundance and grace.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God provides for our needs. • I thank God for what I have. • I am happy when I do good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God provides for our needs. • We thank God for what we have. • We are happy when we do good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are happy when we do good to others. • God intends for our basic needs to be met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God wants for all creation to experience life in all its fullness. • Fullness of life means everyone's basic needs are met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God wants for all creation to experience life in all its fullness. • Fullness of life means everyone's basic needs are met.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name some of the things that God provides • Express thankfulness to God for all the things provided by God • Enumerate the good things that they can do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name some of the things that God provides • Express thankfulness to God for all the things provided by God • Enumerate the good things that they can do • Articulate their feelings about 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what their basic needs are • Cite Bible verses about God's intention in meeting our basic needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm God's intention for creation to have fulfillment, abundance and grace • Define the meaning of fulfillment, abundance and grace • Analyze whether the world's present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify manifestations in the Biblical text of God's desire for the whole creation to experience life in all fullness • State that God intends for each person to experience the fullness of life

	things and experiences around them		situation manifests fulfillment, abundance and grace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enumerate practices that can contribute to creation's having fulfillment, abundance and grace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List down concrete ways they can do to help others meet their basic needs
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 24:1-6; Hebrews 13:16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 24:1-6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 24:1-6; Ephesians 1:3-14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 24:1-6; Ephesians 1:3-14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 24:1-6

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19; Psalm 24:1-6; Psalm 85:8-13; Amos 7:7-15; Ephesians 1:3-14; Mark 6:14-29

Biblical Background

Psalm 24:1-6 reminds us who God is and whose we are. The psalm declares God as Creator who owns the world and everything that lives in it. It also says that people can only find worth and fulfillment when they are faithful to God. Blessings would come to those who are with pure heart and clean hands, meaning those who do the will of God.

Ephesians 1:3-14 is part of Paul's letter to the Christians in Ephesus. It tells us how God chose us, that Christ gave his life in order that we may have life in abundance, and that the Holy Spirit is with us to guide, help and protect us. Being adopted to God's family, no longer an orphan, Paul wanted to tell the Christians in Ephesus that all have received these "spiritual gifts" when they believed in Jesus Christ. The verses speak about the bestowing of God's blessings. It is worthy to note that blessings from God are the result of our union with Christ Jesus. It declares that God wants us to experience fulfillment, abundance and grace through the spiritual blessings from Christ.

That in Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary, God became human and is Sovereign Lord of life and history.

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

July 22, 2018

LESSON 9: JESUS CHRIST

General Concept: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, obedient and faithful in doing God’s ministries of feeding, teaching, healing and preaching.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the Son of God. • Jesus obeys God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the Son of God. • Jesus obeys God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the Son of God. • Jesus obeys God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. • Jesus is obedient and faithful to the will of God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. • Jesus is both human and divine. • Jesus is obedient and faithful to the will of God.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that Jesus is the Son of God • Describe how Jesus obeyed God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assert that Jesus is the Son of God • Portray the works of Jesus • Affirm that Jesus was obedient to God • Express thanks to Jesus who helped people in their sufferings and difficult conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Jesus’s identity as the Son of God, basing on the Bible • Examine Jesus life and find out how Jesus obeyed God • Write their personal confession of faith in Jesus Christ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God • Describe Jesus’ obedience and faithfulness to the will of God • Recognize the manifestation of Jesus’ obedience to God by doing the ministries of feeding, healing, preaching and teaching • Choose to offer time, talents and work in promoting the different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expound on the nature of Jesus as the Christ and as the Son of God • Affirm that Jesus’s compassion to the lowly is a manifestation of obedience and faithfulness to God • Articulate approaches by which persons can emulate Jesus as an obedient child of God

			ministries of the church	
Biblical References				
• Matthew 16:13-16; Mark 6:30-56	• Psalm 23; Matthew 16:13-16; Mark 6:30-56	• Matthew 16:13-16; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56	• Psalm 23; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56; 8:27-30	• Psalm 23; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 2 Samuel 7:1-14a; Psalm 23; Psalm 89:20-37; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

Biblical Background

Psalm 23 says that God is like a shepherd. A shepherd loves and cares for his or her sheep, watches them closely, protects them from danger and makes sure that the sheep will have enough food to eat and water to drink. This allegory about God being a shepherd which is common in the Old Testament means that God watches over us and shows us what is best for us. The New Testament also follows this line of thought as exemplified in John 10, this time as attributed to Jesus. The shepherd life is a nomadic form of life as a shepherd has to keep on looking for green pastures for his or her sheep. Such kind of life is also dangerous for there may be various perils along the way. Israel's life was a life of movement in search for land. As a people, they have been through so many difficulties. There were threats from powerful nations and oppositions from other tribes who were also searching for land. Yet like a shepherd, God continued to pilot them in their journey, protecting them from danger, and providing for their needs.

Matthew 16:13-16 narrates the exchange between Jesus and his disciples when he asked, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" It was Peter who answered, "You are the Christ, the son of the living God." This affirmed Jesus' messianic identity. Jesus wanted his disciples to express what they believed him to be and what they understood about him. It had to be clearly spelled out that Jesus' mission was to God's will. Jesus' understanding of his task as the Messiah came from his experiences with the people with whom he grew up and lived with. Jesus saw the suffering and struggles of the people and made him realize that he must do the task set out for him.

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 shows that Jesus' ministries include preaching, teaching, healing and even feeding just as a compassionate shepherd would do, "shepherd" being a metaphor for one who guides people, protects them from danger and restores them to the fold when they wander. This was how Jesus showed faithfulness and obedience to God.

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

July 29, 2018

LESSON 10: MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS

General Concept: Mary accepted the great honor to be the mother of the Son of God, despite her self-perception of her being of lowly estate, proclaiming that indeed God is a God who lifts up the lowly and brings down the powerful, modelling what it means to be a faithful disciple.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary is the mother of Jesus. • Mary was a loving mother. • Mary obeyed God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary is the mother of Jesus. • Mary was a loving mother. • Mary was obedient to God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary was honored to be the mother of Jesus. • Mary was obedient to God's will. • We should be like Mary and be obedient to God's will. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary was honored to be the mother of the Son of God. • Mary was an active participant in bringing about the will of God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary accepted the great honor to be the mother of the Son of God. • Mary was an active participant in God's liberating acts.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that Mary is the mother of Jesus • Mention ways how Mary showed her love for Jesus • Describe how Mary obeyed God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name the mother of Jesus • Describe Mary as a woman and a mother • Make comparisons between Mary the mother of Jesus and their own mother • Explain that being Jesus' mother is Mary's way of obeying God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express what they know about Mary • List down some traits they know about Mary • Discuss how Mary became obedient to God's will found in the Gospel • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how Mary accepted her call to be the mother of Jesus • Discuss the significance of Mary's acceptance of her call as an active participant in bringing about God's will • Express how one may accept God's call to serve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that God employs people in the work of establishing God's Kingdom on earth • Affirm that lowliness does not hamper God's call to be channels of transformation • Express firm obedience to God's call of societal transformation through dynamic involvement in church and

				community ministries
Biblical References				
• Luke 1:26-38; 2:6-7	• Psalm 14:5b-7; Luke 1:26-56	• Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:26-38, 45-55	• Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:26-56	• Psalm 14; Luke 1:26-46

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 2 Samuel 11:1-15; 2 Kings 4:42-44; Psalm 14; Psalm 145:10-18; Ephesians 3:14-21; John 6:1-21

Brief Biblical Background

Isaiah 7:14 has been attributed to be a prediction of the conception and birth of Jesus, but the context of this quotation is the Prophet Isaiah’s assurance of God’s continued protection and accompaniment of the nation Judah despite all that threatens them. Isaiah was trying to elucidate his point by giving a concrete example of a pregnant young woman: “...Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.” As sure as a young woman who is pregnant will give birth, God will save Judah. A pregnant woman is a very hopeful image of God’s care, sustenance and protection. Immanuel, meaning “God with us”, denotes that God would be with the nation as its protector and the birth of this child would be the sign or promise of it. The pregnant woman would then be a channel of this promise, just as Mary the mother of Jesus is an obedient channel of God’s saving grace.

Psalm 14 talks about people who think that there is no God. They are referred to as “fools” and live a life that is contrary to the will and purpose of God. They are the powerful and get what they covet even if it entails corruption and abuse of power. The psalmist laments that the world is full of this kind of people. Still, the psalmist declares that God takes action and will save God’s people from the clutches of the “fools.” God will seek those who choose to remain wise. Wisdom then is understood as adhering to and obeying the will and purpose of God.

Luke 1:26-56 tells of the announcing of the birth of Jesus, the Son of God, and the celebration that ensued. A significant character in these passages is the mother of Jesus, Mary. She is a young woman who comes from a lowly, poor and insignificant family from Nazareth, but she humbly submits herself to the will of God. Her active participation in God’s liberating acts, despite doubts and uncertainties due to her lowly estate, would bring greater celebration to all of God’s creation. The story of God’s liberating acts through Jesus Christ could never be complete without Mary. Mary’s song, which is now called the “Magnificat”, is Mary’s proclamation of hope that God continues to care for, sustain and protect God’s people. It is a song of praise to God who has acted always in justice, mercy and grace, a God who listens to the cries of God’s people and will always be with God’s people, Immanuel.

LESSON 11: IN JESUS CHRIST, GOD BECAME HUMAN

General Concept: God, in Jesus Christ, came to earth and lived among us to bring fullness of life for all.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is like me. • Jesus lived on earth. • Jesus grows up like me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is a human being like us. • Jesus lived on earth. • Jesus grows up like me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God, in Jesus Christ, came to earth. • Jesus grew in wisdom, in years and in favor with God and the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God, in Jesus Christ, came to earth and lived among us. • The name Jesus means “God redeems” and is a symbol of the fulfillment of God’s promise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name Jesus means “God Redeems” and is a symbol of the fulfillment of God’s promise. • Jesus is the actualization of fullness of life.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that Jesus was a human being. • Describe how Jesus lived and grew as a person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is a human being like us. • Jesus lived on earth. • Jesus grows up like me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how Jesus spent his life with the people • List some Bible verses that tell about Jesus’ growing up in favor with God and the community • Explain why God chose to become human and lived among us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that God in Jesus Christ came to earth and lived among us • Relate the name “Jesus” (which means “God redeems”) to the nature and purpose of Jesus’ life on earth • Realize that Jesus became human as the fulfillment of God’s promise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify how God’s redeeming act is readily seen in the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ • Assert that to be human is to be humane as exhibited in the life and ministry of Jesus • Determine means by which the church can help in the transformation of

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose to experience fullness of life through Jesus Christ 	<p>persons into becoming more humane</p>
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Luke 2:41-52 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ephesians 4:9-10; John 1:14; John 10:10-11 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalm 51:10-12; John 6:29-35; Luke 2: 52 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John 6:24-35; 10:10-11 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ephesians 4:9-10; John 1:14

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:13a; Psalm 51:1-12; Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15; Psalm 78:23-29; Ephesians 4:9-10; John 6:24-35

Brief Biblical Background

Psalm 51:10-12 is part of a prayer of repentance and supplication for God’s accompaniment, renewal and rejuvenation. Being in sin is departing from God. It is only through God that we experience fullness of life. The request for God to “create a clean heart” signifies that only God can do this, and once this is done, the new created being becomes whole and integrated, having a right or steadfast spirit.

Luke 2:41-52 is the only narrative in the New Testament that tells about Jesus’ growing up years. It shows to us that even at a very young age, Jesus was already studying Scripture. Not only that, he took all the opportunity to discuss it among the Temple leaders. This passage also shows us that Jesus had an intimate relationship with God. He was also obedient to his parents. Jesus therefore developed into his fullest potential as a human being.

John 1:14; John 6:29-35; John 10:10-11. The writer of John is not like the writers of Matthew, Mark and Luke. John is not very interested in facts, on what happened, but focuses more on the meaning of what Jesus said and did. John 1:14 is part of John’s introduction of Jesus. According to John, God’s word came to life and took the form of a human being. The ‘Word’ becoming flesh means that God wants to fully communicate with us. God spoke in a way we can truly understand—by becoming one of us. The use of the word “flesh” underscores the total humility of God, the full self-expression of God to humanity. John 6:29-35 tells about Jesus identifying himself as the ‘bread from heaven’. Just as the ‘Word became flesh’ this “bread” that gives life to the world descended in order that fullness of life may be experienced by all. John 10:10-11 also tells about how we may have abundant life in Jesus. In this passage, Jesus identifies himself as the good shepherd who will lay down his life for the sheep. Jesus’ whole life and ministry is God’s message to all. Through this person in Jesus Christ, we may have a foretaste of what is to come—a life in God’s reign where there is abundance and fullness for all.

Ephesians 4:9-10 tries to explain that he who went up to heaven has come down even to the deepest parts of the earth, referring to God who came down to the world in and through Jesus Christ and lived as a human being. He experienced the sufferings and struggles of the

people. He even understands their hope for salvation from everything that negates life and the promise of fullness of life. The incarnation of God in Jesus Christ brings across the message that God is indeed with us, Immanuel.

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
August 12, 2018

LESSON 12: GOD, IN JESUS CHRIST, IS SOVEREIGN LORD OF LIFE

General Concept: In Jesus, God made manifest God’s saving acts and offers eternal life. We therefore must believe and follow Christ and be bearers of fullness of life for others.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is good. • I will be good like Jesus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is our Lord. • We will follow Jesus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is our Lord and Savior. • We believe in and follow Jesus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the ultimate manifestation of God’s sovereignty. • Jesus is the sovereign Lord of Life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is the ultimate manifestation of God’s sovereignty. • Jesus is the sovereign Lord of Life. • Like Jesus, we must be bearers of fullness of life for others.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that Jesus is good • Imitate the good deeds of Jesus • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about what Jesus did to help people • Tell ways on how we can follow Jesus • Thank God for sending Jesus to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustrate through artwork the stories about Jesus’ healing and feeding ministries • Discuss why Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of Life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss that in Jesus, God made manifest God’s saving acts and offers eternal life • Realize that Jesus is the sovereign Lord of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declare that God’s sovereignty is made evident in the life of Jesus • Indicate that Jesus’ Lordship over all of life is manifested in his resurrection

	world to help people in need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrast the kind of life that God wants us to have with the life majority of people are experiencing today 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express creatively their belief and obedience to Jesus as the ultimate manifestation of God's sovereignty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enumerate some of the ways by which we can be bearers of the fullness of life
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John 11:38-44 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 34:1-8; Ephesians 5:1-2a; John 6:1-14, 51 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John 6: 30-40, 47-51 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 34:1-8; Ephesians 5:2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 34:1-8; John 6:35,38-40

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33; Psalm 34:1-8; Psalm 130; 1 Kings 19:4-8; Ephesians 4:25-5:2; John 6:35,38-40, 47-51

Brief Biblical Background

Psalm 34:1-8 is part of a hymn of praise for God's saving grace and presence. It is uttered by a person or people who has/have suffered affliction and oppression and experienced the gift of deliverance. It shows that indeed God heeds the cry of the poor and helps those who are in trouble. One Hebrew word for deliver is *natsal* which in English means "snatching or pulling away". Another Hebrew word and which is used by the psalmist in this passage is *yashah* which means "to take full care of or to help." The psalmist further exhorts the people to "taste and see" the goodness of the Lord. The fullness of life that God brings means experiencing it in tangible ways such as tasting and seeing God's compassionate care and grace.

John 6:1-14, 30-40, 47-51. Verses 1-14 tells of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Indeed, the fullness of life in God involves tasting and feeding. John treats Jesus' miracles a step further from how they were treated in the other gospels. He called them "signs". As with all signs, it points to something or somebody. People were so excited by this sign performed by Jesus. Jesus used this sign of the feeding to make an important lesson on the bread of life talked about starting in verse 30. The kind of bread that Jesus offers will give eternal life. Jesus is not just offering bread. He is the bread that sustains life. To come to Jesus is to believe in him and follow his teachings, thus becoming bearers of fullness of life for others. To partake of the bread of life is to be one with Christ in the building of God's Reign. Such may mean facing persecution or even death just as Jesus had experienced. However, death does not hamper the victory of eternal life.

John 11:38-44 tells of Jesus raising Lazarus to life. Jesus reassures Martha, the sister of Lazarus, that if they believed they would see the glory of God. This life-giving scene only confirms that Jesus is the ultimate manifestation of God's sovereignty and saving acts. It just proves that He is indeed the resurrection and the life.

Ephesians 5:1-2 is a command to believers as children of God to be imitators of God: to love others as Christ loved. It is in this manner that we can also be bearers of fullness of life for others. As persons made new in Christ, we must compassionately care for and love each other. It is the only way that we can show that we truly believe in Jesus—by following his teachings.

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 19, 2018

LESSON 13: GOD, IN JESUS CHRIST, IS SOVEREIGN LORD OF HISTORY

General Concept: God has always been with God’s people throughout history. We must be wise and discerning, always doing the will of God, imbibing the life Jesus lived.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is with me. • I will follow Jesus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus walks with us every day. • God wants us to be obedient like Jesus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is our companion in our everyday life. • We must be wise and understand the will of God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is our companion and guide in all of our life. • We must be wise and discerning of God’s will. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God has always been with us throughout history. • We must be wise and discerning of God’s will, imbibing the life Jesus lived. • God is present in the life and struggle of the people.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that Jesus is with them • Decide to follow Jesus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the times when they feel Jesus is with them • Express how they can follow Jesus in their own ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the life of Solomon and list down some of his traits as a King • Compare the leadership of obedient and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that God in Jesus Christ is the sovereign Lord of history • Share their experience of God in Jesus being their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convey how God solidly moves in history to realize God’s plan of total salvation of the whole of creation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank God for being in the people's lives 	faithful leaders in the Bible from those who are not <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a prayer asking God to lead our life as a nation, discerning and following God's will 	companion and guide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify concrete examples of God's work in their lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ascertain God's design for humanity and the whole of creation by imitating the life Jesus lived and the lessons He taught • Proclaim that promoting the agenda expressing solidarity with the struggles of the people proves God's constant presence in the world
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John 21:1-14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 111; Matthew 16:24-25; John 6:57-58 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Kings 3: 5-14; Acts 17: 24-27; Ephesians 5:15-17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 111; Ephesians 5:15-17; John 6:57-58 	Psalm 111; Ephesians 5:15-17

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14; Psalm 111; Proverbs 9:1-6; Psalm 34:9-14 Ephesians 5:15-17; John 6:57-58

Brief Biblical Background

1 Kings 3: 5-14 narrates King Solomon's dream where he spoke with God. Solomon is King David's successor. He was very much aware of God's kindness to his father and to himself. He recognized his weaknesses and limitations—that he did not have much experience. In that dream conversation, God is impressed that Solomon only asked for an understanding mind to govern God's people. Because of this, God also gave him riches, honor and a long life. When God's people walk in the ways of God, doing God's will, then God will be with them.

Psalm 111 proclaims God and the work of God's hands. This song of thanksgiving expresses the singer's gratefulness to God for the gift of deliverance from all forms of oppression, from enemies and from life-threatening situations. While the psalm may have been sung by an individual, it recounts a delivery of a whole community and not of just one particular person. The psalmist describes God's gracious dealings with Israel as "wonderful deeds", *niphla'oth* in Hebrew. These are deeds which go beyond anything the human mind can think of. The great works of God establishes God's sovereignty over all things and reflect God's graciousness, faithfulness and uprightness as witnessed throughout the life-story and journey of God's people.

Matthew 16:24-25 is an exhortation to faithfully follow Jesus to the point of self-denial. Just like Jesus, we must strive to be completely obedient to God, to the point of losing oneself for the sake of the many. We must strive to imbibe the life Jesus lived.

John 6:57-58 is part of Jesus' speech about who he is: the bread of life. Jesus particularly cited an event in the past where people actually were fed by God with the "bread from heaven". Jesus was trying to tell them that the God who fed them before—the God who sustained them throughout their journey to the Promised Land—is the same God who feeds them with another kind of bread. To eat this "bread of life" means the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah who will offer his life so that others may live. As Jesus' followers, we must be ready to do the same.

John 21:1-14 narrates a post-resurrection event where Jesus appears to his disciples. According to the story, this is the third time that he appears to them but the story shows that the disciples were so surprised to see Jesus, as if they see him for the first time after he rose. It is only John that tells the story this way. Jesus is cooking and invites them to a meal. They eat together, and seemingly Jesus is reminding them to continue the work he has started, even as they have gone back to becoming fisherfolk.

Acts 17: 24-27 is part of Paul's sermon addressed to believers in Athens. Here, Paul expresses his disappointment of their idolatrous ways, even though they are quite religious. Paul discusses about an altar that he saw inscribed "to an unknown God". Paul stresses that God is known and respected among believers as the Creator of all things. He talks about God as the Creator of the world, opposing their opinions about many gods. Paul taught them that all things were made by our One God.

Ephesians 5:15-17 talks about the advice to believers to be wise and discerning, as befitting of God's people. The triune God is the God of history—this is one of the basic affirmations of the Christian Church. This text centers on the connection between wisdom and the proper use of time. For Paul, wisdom is knowing the will of God. Knowing God's will should lead every believer to make wise use of the time just as Jesus Christ did. The evil times did not hinder Christ from knowing and doing God's purpose, but all the more pushed him to work hard in order to usher in the Reign of God.

That in the Holy Spirit, God is present in the world, empowering and guiding believers to understand and live out their faith in Jesus Christ.

Mission Sunday

First Sunday in Kingdomtide

August 26, 2018

LESSON 14: THE HOLY SPIRIT

General Concept: The Holy Spirit is the moving and empowering presence of God.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Holy Spirit is God's Spirit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Holy Spirit is God's Spirit in us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Holy Spirit is the presence of God in our lives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Holy Spirit is the presence of God in the world. • The Holy Spirit empowers people to do God's mission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Holy Spirit is the presence of God. • The Holy Spirit moves and empowers God's people to do God's mission.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that the Holy Spirit is God's spirit. • Describe how the Holy Spirit can help us be good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm that The Holy Spirit is God's spirit • Express appreciation for sending the Holy Spirit to the believing community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize the significance of God's presence in our lives through the Holy Spirit • Identify the distinct work of the Holy Spirit from those of the Creator and Redeemer • Discuss how the Holy Spirit works and empowers us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that the Holy Spirit is the presence of God in the world • Cite examples of how the Holy Spirit empowers the people to do God's mission • Plan a mission project to manifest God's empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe situations that indicate the presence of the Holy Spirit in individuals, churches and communities • Pinpoint Christian characteristics that demonstrate empowerment to realize God's mission • Articulate commitment to participate in the task of declaring God's comforting and empowering spirit to all and in all situations

Biblical References				
• John 6:63; Ephesians 6:18	• John 6:63; 14:15-21; 15:26-27	• Joshua 24:16-18; Ephesians 6:10-18; Acts 1:8	• Ephesians 6:10-20; John 6:62-63, 68-69	• Ephesians 6:10-20; John 6:62-63

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: 1 Kings 8: (1, 6, 10-11), 22-30, 41-43; Psalm 84; Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18; Psalm 34:15-22; Ephesians 6:10-20; John 6:62-63, 68-69

Brief Biblical Background

Joshua 24:16-18 is part of a narration telling us how God moves through the Holy Spirit in the life of God's people. The tribes of Israel are renewing their covenant with God, and the people are promising that they will serve God.

John 6:62-63; 14:15-21; 15:26-27. The statement of Jesus in chapter 6 verses 62 and 63 presents the direction of God's movement as explained by John. Christ was with God as the Word. Then God descended through Christ and dwelt with humanity. The presence of the spirit of God gives life and the gift of understanding and discernment, unlike the flesh which is mortal. Without the spirit the body is useless. The body may move but it moves without meaning and purpose. The spirit is the message of peace, hope and love that Jesus proclaims. Understanding the message proclaimed by Jesus draws people to God. This gift of understanding leads a believer to be transformed and empowered. The words that Jesus proclaims are life-giving and life-empowering. In John 14:15-21 and 15:26-27, Jesus talks about a Helper or Advocate who comes from God. This is the Spirit of Truth who can only be seen by those who love Jesus as shown by keeping His commandments. God's participation in the lives of the people will not end in the death of Jesus Christ. God the Holy Spirit is in us and stays with us. When we need strength to obey God's commands and to testify or witness to the good news that Jesus brings, the Holy Spirit strengthens and empowers us.

Acts 1:8 proclaims that the Holy Spirit indeed empowers believers to be witnesses in all the places that they need to be.

Ephesians 6:10-20 comprise Paul's final instruction to the Ephesian Christians. The city of Ephesus was a Roman colony. The Roman kind of peace has long been imposed on them. The citizens are free to do as they want as long as they give what the Roman Empire demands. This is a clear indication that the kind of peace the Roman Empire brings is provisional. Most people in Ephesus lived under modest means. They were not rich but they were not poor either. Some of them were freed slaves. They embraced the Christian faith at a time when it cost them little. Because of the Roman kind of peace, they did not experience the kind of persecution the Christians in Jerusalem experienced. Being a provisional kind of peace, Paul knew that it will not last long. He therefore warns the Ephesian Christians of the imminent coming of tumultuous times. They must be prepared for such. In emphasizing preparedness, Paul uses the imagery of a soldier, specifically a Roman soldier, preparing for battle. For some Christians, this imagery is a bit problematic. Paul is not talking about war between and among people, but a war against principalities and forces of evil. Paul exhorts the Ephesians to be prepared and to persevere in prayer and to

continue professing and proclaiming what Christ has left us: truth, faith, the Word of God and salvation. This kind of strength can only be achieved when the Spirit of God moves and works within them.

**Christian Education
Sunday**

Second Sunday in Kingdomtide
September 2, 2018

LESSON 15: THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT, GOD IS PRESENT IN THE WORLD

General Concept: The Holy Spirit is manifested through God’s teachings, and through the Advocate, the spirit of truth.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit helps me to love God, family and friends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit is felt when there is love and goodness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit leads us to love, to be peace-loving, patient, kind and good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit moves us to live out love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit empowers us to manifest love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control in our daily lives.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affirm that the Holy Spirit helps us to love God, our family, and our friends Be thankful for the leading and inspiration of the Holy Spirit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express how God can be found and felt Articulate that the Holy Spirit is there when we do good and in loving others Resolve to be more loving and good to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and explain the manifestations of God’s presence in the lives of the learners through the work of the Holy Spirit Dramatize how to live out and witness to their faith in God, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affirm that God is present in the world through the Holy Spirit Articulate that the Holy Spirit is manifested in Christ’s teachings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring to the foreground the significance of the various fruits of the Spirit in the task of fulfilling the mission entrusted by God to God’s people Discover and acknowledge

	<p>others Express how God can be found and felt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate that the Holy Spirit is there when we do good and in loving others • Resolve to be more loving and good to others 	<p>demonstrating how the Holy Spirit works in our lives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan a project the learners can offer or share to the church or community as manifestations of the fruits of the Spirit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cite examples of how the fruits of the Holy Spirit are lived out today • Make a self-assessment on how we live out the fruits of the Holy Spirit 	<p>whatever fruit of the Spirit each person has</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convey their commitment to hone and share their spiritual gifts for towards the realization of a society where the reign of God marked by love, justice and peace is evident
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John 19:26-27; James 1:17-27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9; James 1:19-27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6; James 1:17-27; Galatians 5:22-26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John 16:5-15; Galatians 5:22-23 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9; James 1:17-27; Galatians 5:22-23

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9; Song of Solomon 2:8-13; Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9; Psalm 15; James 1:17-27; Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Brief Biblical Background

Deuteronomy 4:1-2 and 6-9 tell us about Moses telling the people of Israel to obey God’s laws and teachings. He emphasizes complete obedience to the laws that not even a word should be added or subtracted. The laws represent the covenant relationship between God and the people, making both parties bound to the agreement. God’s teachings signify the constant presence of God in the lives of the people. Through obedience, the people continue to experience a unique privilege: knowing personally the God who created the universe. Israel sees the land of promise as God’s greatest blessing to them. Land is important in the road to nationhood. This text emphasizes that success in the acquisition of the land depends on their faithfulness to the covenant. Moses reminds the people of Israel to be faithful and to ensure that the law will be taught to the next generations so that the blessings will forever be with them.

John 16:5-15; 19:26-27. John 16:5-15 reiterates the teaching that God is also manifested in the Advocate that Jesus will send. There are things that Jesus cannot tell them as yet, but which the Spirit of truth will reveal later. John 19:26-27 tells about Jesus’ final instructions to his mother and the beloved disciple. These instructions manifest how the faithful must truly care for each other like one cares for family.

Galatians 5:22-26 lists the manifestations of the Spirit. Christians ought to live a Spirit-filled life, living out these fruits that show a change of heart. This way, believers participate in bringing about the Reign of God, putting into flesh God’s presence in the world.

James 1:19-27 encourages believers to live and act like true Christians. Our integrity as Christians depend mainly on the kind of life we live and the character we have. Christians should both be hearers and doers. We need to hear the Word rightly so we do things rightly. Hearing and doing ought to go together for us to achieve the kind of life that God requires. Listening to the Word and knowing the laws are not enough. Real-life faith should manifest action. Real faith is doing something that shows our faith to be real. In verse 27, James clearly describes an example of the specific spiritual actions expected from Christians: “to care for orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”

Children’s Sunday

Third Sunday in Kingdomtide
September 9, 2018

LESSON 16: THE HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERS AND GUIDES BELIEVERS

General Concept: The Holy Spirit guides, empowers and enables believers to testify to the truth and to do what is good and upright.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit helps me to tell the truth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit teaches us to tell the truth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit guides us to testify to the truth and to do what is good and upright. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit enables us to witness to the truth and to do what is good and upright. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit empowers believers to live out their faith.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affirm that the Holy Spirit helps us to tell the truth Thank God for helping us to tell the truth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell stories about the times they did not tell the truth Express how they felt when they did not tell the truth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the concept of truth Practice doing good and living an upright life with the guidance of the Holy Spirit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge that the Holy Spirit guides and empowers believers Articulate that the Holy Spirit helps us to testify and witness to the truth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss ways of how we may maximize the fruits of the spirit in the daily living out of our faith Determine potential challenges in the

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask forgiveness from God and ask help to tell the truth always 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always value the truth just as Jesus did 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze how the Holy Spirit helps us to choose what is good and upright • Commit to participate in the quest for social transformation 	<p>current times that may hamper the living out of our faith and in testifying to the truth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail different approaches in surmounting the challenges and impediments encountered in the living out of one's faith
Biblical References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 7; John 16:13 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proverbs 22: 17-23; James 3: 1-6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 125:4-5; James 2: 14-17; John 16:13a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23; Isaiah 35:4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proverbs 22:1-23; Psalm 125; James 2:1-10

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23; Psalm 125; Psalm 146; Isaiah 35:4; James 2:1-10; (11-13), 14-17; Mark 7:24-37

Brief Biblical Background

Psalm 125 is a prayer for guidance in the dark and difficult moments in life. The psalmist probably wrote this psalm at a moment when he or she felt powerless in the face of injustice, corruption and impudence. Righteous and faithful people are not free from trials and tribulations but the psalmist affirms that in the midst of all these, there is a powerful God who is an ever-present help. The loving embrace of God is a permanent protection for all people. The key to victory against all sorts of tribulation is trusting in a God who loves and protects God's people.

Proverbs 22:1-23 stresses the important teaching of the significance of having a good name. Having a good name is about integrity. It is about how a person performs her or his responsibilities. It is about having a relationship with others founded on love, respect and acceptance. All persons are created by God whether rich or poor. Since all persons are created by God, each has the responsibility to ensure having a good name. Being righteous and doing what is just are some of the core foundations of having a good name. This passage also tries to remind the people to take into heart the counsel of the wise so that they are guided in always telling the truth. It also guides people against exploiting the poor.

Isaiah 35:4 empowers those who are afraid to be strong and unafraid as God is there with them and will save them. This important promise is Isaiah's central message. This is also where the people's hope lies. The restoration of God's people after difficult and painful times encourages them to do what is good and upright.

Acts 7 records Stephen's speech about Israel's relationship with God. From Old Testament history, he narrated that the Jews had constantly rejected God's message and God's prophets, and that the Council had rejected the Messiah, God's Son. He made three main points: that Israel's history is the history of God's acts in the world; that people worshipped God long before there was a temple, because God does not live in a temple; that Jesus' death was just one more example of Israel's rebellion against and rejection of God. This is the truth that Stephen testified to and defended before the Council and for which he was stoned to death.

John 16:13 enables believers to imbibe the Spirit of truth who will guide them to the truth and will reveal to them the things that Jesus left unsaid.

James 2: 1-10; 14-17; 3: 1-6. James 2:1-10 raises a question of what faith really is. James condemns showing partiality to people who show signs of wealth. Wealth and influence come together. It seems that in the time of James, people who had wealth and influence were given top priority and special places in the community of faith. James disparages such kind of attitude which seems to be evident in the church and among people who claim to believe in Jesus Christ. This message of James is a call to the church to examine itself on the way members treat each other. James 2: 14- 17 argues that faith without works of mercy is not gainful and advantageous. Paul is clearly stating that faith is not true if not coupled with works. Faith is an operative grace: it works by love and kindness, both to God in Jesus Christ and to our fellow human being. Christ is the only cause and author of salvation. But Christ, in his life and ministry, showed compassion and value to people and responded to their needs. James 3: 1-6 is an admonition to people who cannot hold his or her tongue. James compares the tongue to three things: the bit, the rudder, and fire. With a small bit one can make a horse go wherever one wants. With a small rudder, one can steer a large ship. With a small spark, one can start a forest fire. James warns Christians to guard their tongue to keep them from trouble.

Youth Sunday

Fourth Sunday in Kingdomtide

September 16, 2018

LESSON 17: UNDERSTANDING AND LIVING OUT OUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

General Concept: Believers must keep the Word of God by understanding and living out their faith in Jesus Christ, through the help of the Holy Spirit.

<i>NKP</i>	<i>YE</i>	<i>OE</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>A</i>
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<i>Specific Concepts</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love to listen to stories about God. • I love to tell stories about God to my friends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We love to listen to stories about God. • We share stories about God to each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We learn lessons from stories about God. • We relate to the life and witness of faithful servants of God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Holy Spirit enables us to understand and live out the Word of God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Holy Spirit inspires believers to obey God and understand and live out their faith.
<i>Learning Objectives</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate stories about God • Be excited to tell others the stories they hear about God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell their favorite stories about God • Devise ways to share their favorite stories about God • Thank God for letting them know about God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate stories from the Bible of experiences of some faithful servants of God • Choose a person in the Bible whose faith and life is worth following • Write a letter of commitment to God expressing their desire to be a faithful and obedient servant of Jesus Christ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss their understanding of faith • Explain the relationship between faith and deeds • Express their commitment to live out their faith in their daily lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how living out our faith in Jesus is akin to keeping the Word of God • Exemplify the means by which the Holy Spirit enthuses us to proclaim our faith in Jesus Christ • Express determination to be faithful to the will of God through active involvement in the work of proclaiming God's Kingdom
<i>Biblical References</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 19:7-14; James 2:14-17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 19:7-14; Luke 19: 1-10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 19:7-14; James 2:14-17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 19:7-14; Mark 8:27-38

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Psalm 19:7-14; Proverbs 1:20-33; Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 116:1-9; James 3: 1-12; Mark 8:27-38

Brief Biblical Background

Psalm 19: 7-14 exalts the Word of God, the Law. Unlike the preceding verses where God is referred to by the common name 'el or God, the author in these verses has changed tone by using *Yahweh* or Lord, the name which has been revealed to Moses during the burning bush experience. This shows that God is revealed more intimately through the Law or the Word of God—the personal voice of God to God's people. This choice of name also proves the people's choice to follow God as shown in their reliance on the Word of God to instruct, direct and guide them as they live out their faith.

Mark 8:27-38 tells about the full disclosure of who Jesus is, but this disclosure is confined to the disciples only. In the preceding chapters of Mark, there have been enough situations where questions were raised about the person of Jesus. In this chapter, we see two levels of questioning. The first question is general: "Who do people say that I am?" The answers to this question reflects the people's confusion of Jesus' identity. The second question is specific: "But who do you say that I am?" directed to the disciples. It requires a more intimate answer and not one based on what they have heard. It is also an evaluation of the depth of the disciples' understanding of Jesus as well as that of the ministry they are to continue doing. Peter is the first to answer and make a declaration the Jesus is the Messiah (anointed or the chosen one), understood as the long-awaited Savior of the world. In these passages, we see an abrupt shift from Peter's declaration to Jesus teaching about the reality of suffering, a reality that Peter failed to grasp. It is one thing to declare Jesus as the Christ and another thing to accept the reality of persecution that comes with living out this declaration and faith.

Luke 19: 1-10 tells about the conversion of Zacchaeus. He is a chief tax collector thus plays quite an important role in the corrupt system that perpetuates economic oppression. With so much curiosity about Jesus' life and ministry, Zacchaeus climbs up to a tree in order to see Jesus. When Jesus sees him, Jesus declares the intention to stay at his house. Zacchaeus then confesses and repents of all the ill that he has done to the people. To show his genuine repentance, Zacchaeus promises to repay with generous interest (more than what was required by law) those he had cheated. He even promises to give half of his possessions to the poor. Jesus appreciates his act of restitution and declares that salvation has come to him and his household.

Acts 3 tells about the prophetic witness that one does as a believer of Christ: doing and preaching God's Word as empowered by the Holy Spirit. Peter and John heal a lame man which prompts the lame man to praise God. Peter takes this opportunity to preach the Word of God and share Jesus Christ to the crowd gathered there who witnessed the healing. Peter's main point was that God continues to work and this time has taken a new form in the life and ministry of Jesus. He clearly presents his message by telling who Jesus is and how we must respond to what Jesus did: truly following Jesus as their Messiah and as their Lord.

James 2: 14-17 argues that faith without works of mercy is not gainful and advantageous. Paul is clearly stating that faith is not true if not coupled with works. Faith is an operative grace: it works by love and kindness, both to God in Jesus Christ and to our fellow human being. Christ is the only cause and author of salvation. But Christ, in his life and ministry, showed compassion and value to people and responded to their needs. As we have gained new life in Jesus Christ, we must live out our faith through good works.