LESSONS ON THE UCCP STATEMENT OF FAITH

A Sunday School Guide for Adults

The Kingdom of God is present where faith in Jesus Christ is shared, where healing is given to the sick, where food is given to the hungry, where light is given to the blind, and where liberty is given to the captive and oppressed.

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany February 24, 2019

LESSON 40: GOD'S KINGDOM IS WHERE FAITH IS SHARED

General Concept: The Kingdom of God is present where faith in Jesus Christ is shared.

Biblical References: Acts 10:24-48

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Genesis 45:3-11, 15; Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40; 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50; Luke 6:27-38

Other Appropriate References: Romans 1:8; Acts 10:42-43; Acts 20:21; John 4: 19-42

Age-Level Concepts

- We share and learn from each other's faith journey.
- We pray together as a community.
- We regularly attend and invite our friends to attend Sunday School, worship, and mission activities of the church.
- Our faith empowers us to proclaim God's Kingdom of love, justice and peace to all people.

Learning Objectives

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

- Share and learn from each other's faith journey
- Resolve to attend and participate in all activities of the church as an expression of their faith in Jesus Christ
- Realize that it is our faith in Jesus that empowers us to do kin-dom building

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket,

Biblical Background

Acts 10:24-48

The greatest barrier to the spread of the gospel in the first century was the Jewish-Gentile conflict. Most of the early believers were Jewish, and to them it was scandalous even to think of associating with



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Gentiles. But God told Peter to take and share the gospel to a Roman to which Peter obeyed despite his background and personal feelings. God was making it clear that the Good News of Christ is for everyone! We should not allow any barrier – language, culture, prejudice, geography, economic level or educational level – to keep us from telling or sharing others about Christ.

In every nation there are hearts restless for God, ready to receive the gospel – but someone must share and take it to them. Seeking God is not enough – people must find Him.

Peter's brief and powerful sermon contains a concise statement of the gospel. It proclaims Jesus' perfect life of servanthood; his death on the cross; his resurrection, which he personally witnessed and experienced. A sermon or witness for Christ, or the sharing of the faith to others need not be long to be effective. It should be Spirit-led and should center on Christ – the way and the truth and the life.

Cornelius, a wealthy Gentile and a military man became a Christian convert through Peter's witness and sharing of his faith. A new chapter in Christian history was written as a Jewish Christian leader and a Gentile Christian convert discovered something significant about God at work in each other. Cornelius needed Peter and his gospel to know the way to salvation. Peter, on the other hand, came to a realization that Gentiles are included in God's plan of salvation, and that they only needed to hear the story of salvation by those who have experienced it. (Zondervan, Life Application Study Bible, pp. 1971-1972).

Suggested Lesson Outline

Expressing Praise and Thanks to God

Greetings and Announcements

Opening Hymn "How Great Thou Art"

Opening Prayer (You may also pray for those who are celebrating their birthdays/ anniversaries)

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Read the biblical reference responsively
- The facilitator or teacher presents the biblical background of the text.
- Guide questions for discussion:
 - How did Cornelius learn about Jesus?
 - How does conflict or prejudice affect our preaching or sharing of the good news to others?
 - What is the story trying to imply about sharing our faith to others especially those who are not members of our own fold?

Lessons Learned

- It is our obligation to share our faith to others so that others may know about Jesus Christ and the good news of salvation.
- Sharing one's faith does and should not only take place within our fold. Sharing one's faith must also be extended to others outside our fold. Jesus commanded us to bring the good news to all peoples in the world.
- God's kingdom belongs to everyone who knows, believes and accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior. We, like Peter, who have already encountered and experienced Jesus and His salvation, must take effort to share to those who have not yet found the way to God's Kingdom.



Applying the Lessons Learned

- Try this at home with your family: Weekly sharing about how they have encountered Jesus in their lives; what they have learned more about Jesus.
- Before the Sunday School starts, or may be at a certain part of the worship service, have a few minutes of sharing (2-3 people maybe) about an experience when they have shared their faith to others. What impact did it bring to the person whom they shared their faith with?
- As a result of your sharing to others, you may invite your friends to join you in your Bible Study sessions, Sunday School or worship service, to further deepen their understanding about God.

Closing Worship

Closing Hymn "O Zion, Haste" (The Methodist Hymnal 299; MASP 113)

O Zion, haste, thy mission high fulfilling, to tell to all the world that God is Light; That He who made all nations is not willing, one soul should perish, lost in shades of night.

Refrain:

Publish glad tidings, tidings of peace, tidings of Jesus, redemption, and release.

Behold how many thousands still are lying, bound in the dark-some prison-house of sin, With none to tell them of the Savior's dying, or of the life He died for them to win. [Refrain]

Proclaim to every people, tongue, and nation, that God, in whom they live and move, is Love;

Tell how He stooped to save His lost creation, and died on earth that we might live above.

Give of thine own to bear the message glorious; give of thy wealth to speed them on their way;

Pour out thy soul for them in prayer victorious, and all thou spendest Jesus will repay.

Closing Prayer

Transfiguration Sunday

Last Sunday before Lent March 3, 2019

LESSON 41: GOD'S KINGDOM IS WHERE HEALING IS GIVEN TO THE SICK

General Concept: The Kingdom of God is present where those who are physically sick are given healing and wholeness; and where a society that is sick is healed and transformed.

Biblical References: Acts 3:1-10

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2; Luke 9:28-36, (37-43a)



Age-Level Concepts

- God heals those who are sick in mind, body and spirit.
- God empowers us to be partners in the restoration of the wholeness of life.
- God empowers us to work for the radical transformation of rotten structures of society that breed all forms of sickness.

Learning Objectives

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

- Explain what holistic wellness/healing means according to the biblical perspective
- Discuss the effects of personal wellness and sickness to both church and society
- Resolve to participate in the work for the restoration of wellness/healing of the society

Materials Needed: The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket,

Biblical Background

Acts 3:1-10

The Jews observed three times of prayer – morning (9:00 a.m.), afternoon (3:00 p.m.) and evening (sunset). At these times, devout Jews and Gentiles who believed in God often went to the temple to pray. Peter and John were going to the temple at 3:00 p.m.

The gate called Beautiful was an entrance to the temple, not to the city. It was one of the favored entrances, and many people passed through it on their way to worship. The lame man was begging to be placed where he would be seen by the most people. Giving money to beggars was considered praiseworthy in the Jewish religion. So, the beggar wisely placed himself where pious people might see him on their way to worship at the temple.

The lame man asked for money, but Peter gave him something much better – HEALING – so that he can use his legs. (Zondervan, Life Application Study Bible, p. 1948). Peter and John understood that the lame beggar was not just asking for money. He was begging for more. He was actually pleading for the restoration of his own self-respect, his dignity as a human person, which the Temple might have neglected or might not have seen throughout the years of its existence. As Peter and John were confronted by this reality of a lame beggar in front of the Temple, they could not simply ignore it. They had to identify themselves with the struggle and hope of the lame beggar in restoring his life and dignity into wholeness. For the kingdom of God which their Lord and Master had inaugurated and of which they had to bear witness is a kingdom where people's life and dignity are made whole.

Healing as Wholeness of Life

Since sickness involves the whole reality of human life, healing should be viewed as the restoration of the wholeness of life. This would mean that healing does not only concern the curing of a person's physical illness, but more importantly, ensuring that he or she would not get sick. This does not merely imply providing adequate medical services, but rather it involves the radical transformation of the sick structures of society that breed people's physical sickness which hinders them to rise up and walk. (Luna Dingayan. We Believe in the Kingdom of God (A Study Guide on the UCCP Statement of Faith, p. 21-22).

Suggested Lesson Outline



Expressing Praise and Thanks to God

Opening Hymn "Come, Let us Worship Our God Now" (Hymnal of Faith Journey, 7) Opening Prayer (Also pray for the birthday celebrants, if there is any)

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Read the text responsively.
- The teacher/facilitator explains the biblical background of the text.
- Guide questions for discussion:
 - Peter gave healing to the lame beggar instead of money. What is the Bible trying to tell us about this healing experience?
 - What is the Bible trying to imply about the presence of the sick and beggars in the temple vicinity?
 - How does individual or personal illness affect the church and the society?

Lessons Learned

- Health is more important than money and anything else.
- Peter wanted the lame to know about God and experience God's power that brings healing which is better than just being contented of the coins he received.
- Peter wanted the religious leaders to realize that true religiosity can be expressed in caring for others especially the sick and not just by bringing offering and doing sacrifices in the temple neglecting the real needs of the neglected people.
- In the Kingdom of God, everyone is taken cared of healing is given to the sick. Healthy individuals make a healthy church and a healthy community. Sick individuals make a sick church and a sick community.

Applying the Lessons Learned

- Share your experiences of healing. Would you consider it a sign of the presence of God's kingdom? In what way? Explain.
- What particular aspect of healing are you trying to give more importance in your church

 physical, spiritual, social, emotional, psychological?
- What programs or activities does your church actively involve in to contribute to the wellness or healing of your community?
- Could your church be considered a healing community? In what way?

Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Song "Silver and Gold Have I None"

Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have thee I give In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up, and walk

(Walking and leaping, and praising God) 2x In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up, and walk.

Closing Prayer



First Sunday in Lent March 10, 2019

LESSON 42: GOD'S KINGDOM IS WHERE FOOD IS GIVEN TO THE HUNGRY

General Concept: The Kingdom of God is present where food is given to the hungry and the world's resources are equitably distributed.

Biblical References: Luke 16:19-31; Luke 9:10-17

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16; Romans 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13

Age- Level Concepts

- God created a world where there is enough food and other resources to be distributed to all.
- There are hungry people because there are greedy people.
- The Kingdom of God is about the equitable distribution of the world's resources.

Learning Objectives

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

- Understand why there are a lot of poor and hungry people in the world
- As a church, suggest solutions to the government to stop this unequal distribution of the nation's resources
- Affirm that each one has to share God's blessings to others so that no one will go hungry
- As a church, create or design a program on food distribution for the poor and the needy

Materials Needed: The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket,

Biblical Background

Luke 16:19-31 Lazarus and the Rich Man

The Pharisees considered wealth to be a proof of a person's righteousness. Jesus startled them with this story where a diseased beggar is rewarded and a rich man is punished. The rich man did not go to hell because of his wealth but because he was selfish, refusing to feed Lazarus, take him in, or care for him. The rich man was hardhearted in spite of his great blessings. (Zondervan, Life Application Study Bible, p. 1839)

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus deals with the question of hunger in the midst of plenty. It pictures the scandalous gap between the rich and the poor. It shows how man's selfishness, greed, and gluttony would make him blind and indifferent to the reality of suffering and hunger around him. Such blindness and indifference have created an unbridgeable abyss that isolated the rich man from the rest of humanity – from Lazarus and Abraham himself. (Luna Dingayan, We Believe in the Kingdom of God. A Study Guide on the UCCP Statement of Faith, p 25).

Luke 9:10-17 The Feeding of the Five Thousand

The people who followed Jesus in his ministry were not only hungry; they were also selfish. After a day of healing the sick and preaching about the kingdom of God, Jesus and the disciples stopped to rest and eat. No doubt some of the people present brought food, others did not. Jesus and his disciples had only



five loaves and two fishes. Hence, the disciples suggested that the people be told to go and buy food for themselves.

Instead of following the disciples' suggestions, Jesus used the occasion to teach by example a very important value in God's kingdom, the value of sharing. Thus, he said to his disciples, "You yourselves give them something to eat" (v. 13). And so the disciples laid before the multitude what they have, and thereupon others were also moved to share what they have. In the end, there was more than enough for everyone.

What was miraculous in this incident was that people suddenly ceased to be possessive about their food and began to share, only to find out that there was more than enough to go around. Things do tend to multiply when you share them. (Luna Dingayan, We Believe in the Kingdom of God. A Study Guide on the UCCP Statement of Faith, p. 28).

Suggested Lesson Outline

Expressing Praise and Thanks to God

Greetings and Announcements

Opening Hymn "I Come to the Garden Alone" (Hymnal of Faith Journey,165)

Opening Prayer (Also pray for the birthday celebrants, if there is any)

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Divide the class into two groups. Group 1 will read Luke 16:19-31 and Group 2 to read Luke 9:10-17.
- Present the biblical background of the two texts.
- Guide Questions for Discussion:
 - o Group 1
 - 1) What do you think is the reason why the rich man did not mind sharing his food to Lazarus?
 - 2) After his death, the rich man went to hell. Is it really hard for rich people to enter the heaven? Why or why not? What was wrong with the rich man?
 - 3) Are materials things including money curse or blessing? Explain.
 - o Group 2
 - 1) What was Jesus trying to teach the disciples about the situation?
 - 2) Is it possible to help or share even if you do not have anything in your hand?
 - 3) What do you think is the real miracle that happened in the story?
 - 4) How important is the value of sharing to ease hunger and poverty?

Lessons Learned

- The kingdom of God is a kingdom of sharing as exemplified by Jesus in the feeding of the multitude.
- How can we experience abundance? (Human selfishness has no place in God's kingdom. There is abundance in God's kingdom because people share what they have as practiced by the early Christians (Acts 2:44-46)
- Why is there hunger for food in many parts of our country? Would you consider human selfishness as a reason? Explain.



 Giving food to the hungry should be deeply founded on the kingdom value of sharing. And this would mean not only doling out food to those in need, but more importantly, building up social and economic structures of relationships which would ensure that no one will go hungry and that everyone experiences life – life in all its fullness. (Luna Dingayan).

Applying the Lessons Learned

- What is your attitude toward your money and possessions? Do you hoard it selfishly, or do you use them to help others that they may also experience a good life as you do? Explain.
- How could the church concretely manifest in its life and work the kingdom value of sharing?
- As a church, plan a program of sharing your resources to the needy in your community.

Closing Worship

Offertory Closing Song

"Spirit, Open my Heart" (Hymnal of Faith Journey, 294)

Closing Prayer

Second Sunday in Lent March 17, 2019

LESSON 43: GOD'S KINGDOM IS WHERE LIGHT IS GIVEN TO THE BLIND

General Concept: The Kingdom of God is present where the physically blind is given sight and those who are blind to society's realities are enlightened.

Biblical References: Mark 10: 46-52; John 8:12

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27; Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 13:31-35

Age- Level Concepts

- There are different kinds of physical blindness; some kinds can be cured, other kinds cannot.
- Blindness can also be refusing to see the harsh realities of society.
- Helping others see and understand the harsh realities happening in our society is also a way of giving light to the blind.
- Enlightening people means leading them to commit to the work of establishing the Kingdom of God.

Learning Objectives

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

- Discuss different aspects of blindness and how each can be cured
- Evaluate our Church's vision and determine whether we see clearly the realities of life
- Take initiatives in "giving light to the blind"

Materials Needed: The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket,



Biblical Background

Mark 10:46-52

Beggars were a common sight in most towns. Because most occupations of that day required physical labor, anyone with a crippling disease or disability was at a severe disadvantage and was usually forced to beg, even though God's laws commanded care for such needy people (Lev. 25:35-38). Blindness was considered a curse from God for sin (John 9:2), but Jesus refuted this ideas when he reached out to heal the blind. By healing Bartimaeus, Jesus wanted to bring him back not only to right relationship with the people but also with God, by looking not on his sin but on his faith.

"Son of David" was a popular way of addressing Jesus as the Messiah, because it was known that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David (Isa. 8:7). The fact that Bartimaeus called Jesus the Son of David shows that he recognized Jesus as the Messiah. His faith in Jesus brought about his healing. (Zondervan, Life Application Study Bible, p. 1757).

John 8:12

Light stands for truth and clarity. To be blind is to live with no direction, no clarity of purpose and goal in life. To be blind is to live in falsehood and deception. On the other hand, to live in the light is to live in clarity of truth, to live in the knowledge of what is right and wrong, to know the difference between truth and deception. Jesus is light and life because he has borne upon himself the truth and clear meaning and direction of human existence.

The kingdom of God is not a kingdom of blindness but a kingdom of light. Giving light to the blind, therefore, is a sign of the presence of God's reign. Light is one of the primary gifts which God gave and creates for the life of the world. This is affirmed in Genesis when the writer wrote of God saying, "Let there be light and there was light." The coming of the Son of God is described as the coming of light in the midst of a world in darkness. As an inaugurator of God's kingdom, Jesus' own ministry involves giving light to the blind. (Luna Dingayan, We Believe in the Kingdom of God. A Study Guide on the UCCP Statement of Faith, p. 31)

Suggested Lesson Outline

Expressing Praise and thanks to God

Greetings and Announcements

Opening Hymn 'This is God's Wondrous World" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 234 Opening Prayer

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Assign two readers to read the biblical references from Mark 10:46-52 and John 8:12
- The Facilitator/Teacher explains the biblical background of the two biblical references
- Discuss the following questions:
 - O What led Jesus to heal Bartimaeus?
 - What can you say about the people who stopped Bartimaeus? Can we consider them blind? Why or why not?



- O Do you think Bartimaeus' healing could have also made him to realize Jesus removing the darkness of falsehood in his life? Explain.
- What did Jesus mean when He said, "Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
- How can the giving back of light to the blind be a sign of the reign of God's kingdom?

Lessons Learned

- Giving light to the blind does not only mean curing the physical blindness of people.
 It involves more importantly the opening of eyes of people to the truth concealed
 by a system of falsehood and deception that has pervaded people's life and
 practice.
- Opening of people's eyes to the truth will certainly break the system of falsehood and deception that paralyzes people to do what is right and productive. (Dingayan, p. 31)
- Mention other types of blindness you see in the story. (1. Blindness to the truth that Bartimeaus needs help, 2. Blindness to the truth that Jesus can make miracles)

Applying the Lessons Learned

- As an instrument of building God's kingdom, the Church must bear witness to light, to be a light amidst the forces of blindness. Jesus said, "Your light shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise our Father (Matt. 5:16).
- Light, therefore, should characterize the life and work, worship and ministry, witness and service of the church. (Luna Dingayan, We Believe in the Kingdom of God, p. 31)
- How can the Church witness to light? List down or plan out a program or activities that show your being a light to the world.

Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn "Open My Eyes that I May See"

Closing Prayer

Third Sunday in Lent March 24, 2019

LESSON 44: GOD'S KINGDOM IS WHERE LIBERTY IS GIVEN TO THE CAPTIVE AND OPPRESSED

General Concept: The Kingdom of God is present where those unjustly prisoned are set free and the oppressed delivered from the tyrants; this we proclaim as Christ's disciples.

Biblical References: Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18-19

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63:1-8; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9

Age-Level Concepts

- God intends for all persons to be free from all forms of bondage and oppression.
- We must take the side of those unjustly accused and imprisoned and work for their release.
- We must denounce all forms tyranny and announce the breaking forth of the Kingdom of God.



Learning Objectives

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

- Discuss how oppression prevents people from experiencing the good life intended by God
- As a church, take actions to help release those unjustly accused and imprisoned
- Make a stand to denounce all forms of tyranny through non-violent actions
- Realize that helping the poor and the oppressed is an expression of our faith in Jesus Christ and is part of our responsibility as Christians

Materials Needed: The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket

Biblical Background

Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18-19

Jesus was quoting from Isaiah 61:1-2, when He read the scriptures to the people in the synagogue (Luke 4:18-19). Isaiah pictures the deliverance of Israel from exile in Babylon as a Year of Jubilee when all debts are cancelled, all slaves are freed, and all property is returned to original owners (Lev. 25). But the release from Babylonian Exile had not brought the fulfillment the people had expected; they were still a conquered and oppressed people. So Isaiah must have been referring to a future Messianic age. Jesus boldly announce, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Jesus was proclaiming himself as the One who would bring this good news to pass. (Zondervan, Life Application Study Bible, p. 1800).

Captivity is a situation wherein people are denied of freedom. People can be captives in many ways. For instance, the poor is captive of his poverty and the rich is captive of his wealth and greed. The oppressed is captive of his situation where he is trampled upon and the oppressor is captive of his by domination for power. The religious is also captive of religiosity which creates self-righteousness and the sinner is a captive of his condemnation for not being able to obey religious laws. All these forms of captivity are evil because they destroy life.

People can also be captives to God's will. Jesus, for instance, is a captive to God's will and purpose. Captivity to God's will is true liberty because it enhances life. The essence of liberty is life. The moment life is denied of us, then, we are not truly free. If we have more guns to kill than food to sustain life, then, we are not truly free. In the same manner, the essence of life is liberty. A person who is not free is as good as dead. Hence, life and liberty are one and the same thing.

Jesus viewed His mission and ministry as one that would give life and liberty to the captives and oppressed. By adopting the Jubilee Celebration as His program (Lev. 25:1-55) and by following the traditions of the prophets (Isaiah 61:1-4), Jesus intends to bring good news to the poor, recovering of sight to the blind, and liberty to the captives and oppressed. The Kingdom of God is a kingdom of liberty. It is where people are freed from all forms of captivity that destroys life and become captives only to God's will and purpose for life. (Luna Dingayan. We Believe in the Kingdom of God, p. 33-34).

Suggested Lesson Outline

Expressing Praise and Thanks to God

Greetings and Announcements

Opening Song "Come O Fount of Every Blessing" Hymnal of Faith Journey,326 Opening Prayer (Also pray for the birthday celebrants, if there is any)



Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Let the learners read the two biblical references.
- The teacher/facilitator will discuss the biblical background of the texts.
- Guide questions for discussion
 - Mention the similarities or differences of the two biblical references.
 - O What is the main theme of the two references?
 - What did Jesus mean when he said, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing?"
 - Mention some forms of captivity the people experienced during Jesus' time.
 How did Jesus free or liberate them?

Lessons Learned

- What are some forms of captivities or bondages the people are experiencing today?
 Is there hope for them to be liberated or freed?
- Do you think the Church has a role to play in the liberation or release of all those who are experiencing captivity? Explain.
- Is it right for the Church to involve in activities of liberating those who are captives and oppressed? Explain.

Applying the Lessons Learned

- As a Church how can we help liberate or free those who are experiencing captivity in this present age?
- Design a program or activities to concretize your work for liberation.
- Can the Church's work for freedom and liberation be its participation in kingdom building? Why or why not?

Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Song "Forward through the Ages" (HFJ, 267) or "Go, Tell Everyone"

God's spirit is in my heart, He has called me and set me apart This is what I have to do, what I have to do.

Refrain:

He sent me to preach the good news to the poor Tell prisoners, that they are prisoners to more Tell blind people that they can see And set the down-trodden free

And go, tell everyone, the news that the Kingdom of God has come And go, tell everyone, the news that the Kingdom has come.

Just as the Father sent me, so I'm sending you out to be My witness throughout the world, the whole of the world. (Refrain)

Don't worry what you have to say, don't worry because on that day The Spirit will speak in your heart, will speak in your heart. (Refrain)

Closing Prayer

