

LESSONS ON THE UCCP STATEMENT OF FAITH

A Sunday School Guide for Youth

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

40. Topic Title: **God's Kingdom is Where Faith is Shared**

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

Lectionary References: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27:13-14

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

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

- 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 compels us to proclaim God's Kingdom of love, justice and peace to all people.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners will be able to:

- Share their own stories of faith.
- Express their concern and care for each other in a prayer.
- Create something to invite other members of the community to join church activities.

Memory verse: Romans 1: 8 "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world."

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



Biblical Background

- Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18. The biblical account marks the beginning of a relationship. It was a special kind of a relationship because it was made between a deity (a God) and an ordinary human being. More importantly, it was God who initiated the relationship. God made himself known to Abraham through a “covenant-relationship”.

A covenant is understood as a treaty or a contract between two parties. Both parties involved in such treaty are bound to the agreements. Each party is expected to adhere to what the treaty expects from each other. God promised Abraham to give him a son through whom Abraham’s descendants will become numerous. God intends to make Abraham’s family become his people and that they are only to worship YAHWEH and no other gods.

The covenant God made with Abraham has set the direction of a people’s journey. Abraham was found faithful by God despite the shortcomings of the members of his family. God continued to bless the household of Abraham and remained faithful to the promises made. On the other hand, Abraham remained true to God even up to the end of his life. This kind of faith was articulated and translated from generations to generations. Abraham’s family and descendants continued to be recipients of God’s blessings despite their sinfulness. This tells us that God’s love and faithfulness exceeds beyond what has been agreed upon in the covenant. “God accepted Abraham not because he led a perfect life, but because of his responsiveness to God’s promises,

Jesus became the sign of the new covenant God established with the people. It is not different from what was established before but this time Jesus’ blood will seal such agreement. Through faith in Jesus Christ, God continues to fulfill his promises. Believers are called to proclaim and share this faith to remind the people of God’s will and intention.

- Psalm 27: 13-14. This portion of a psalm is a declaration of faith. The psalmist conveys a message with such confidence and conviction that God will never leave him especially at times when everybody seems to forsake him. The writer wanted to assure the readers that God will come to rescue anybody who waits. Faith then is expressed in waiting, having a strong heart and believing in the goodness of God. The writer effectively shared his faith through this song so that others may have the same faith as he has.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time. Arrange the chairs in the classroom into a circle. Greet the learners as they come in and make every one of them feel welcomed to the class.

Opening Song: “A Common Love”

A common love for each other
A common gift to the Savior
A common bond holding us to the Lord
A common strength when we’re weary
A common hope for tomorrow
A common bond holding us to the Lord.

In God’s family we can meet each one’s need



We can light each one's path
We can bear each one's grief
As God's children we can comfort each care
We can build each one's faith
We can work, we can share.

Opening Prayer: we come to you O God in study and in worship. Open our hearts so that we may be able to share our stories, listen to others and together grow in faith. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen

Getting Ready

Story-Chain. Tell the learners that they are going to tell a story. Each of them has to contribute a sentence or two in order to finish the story. Use the story of Abraham and his dream based on Genesis 15: 1-12 as the basis of the activity. The biblical text should be read after the Story-chain to check whether the students are familiar with the story.

The teacher may start the story by saying: "Abraham was already old...." The next student will continue by giving a sentence until all has contributed. The story telling continues to go in circle until it is finished. After the story chain, ask someone to read the text found in Genesis 15:1-18.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth. Let the learners respond to the following questions:

- What was God's promise to Abraham?
- How did Abraham respond to God's promise?
- What was established between God and Abraham in this story?

Lessons Learned:

- Do you believe that Abraham's relationship with God is worth sharing to his descendants even up to our present time? WHY?
- What values of life can we draw out from Abraham's story that could be very helpful for our life and growth as young people of the church?

Applying the Lessons Learned

Sharing of Stories. Divide the class into small groups of 3.

- Ask the learners to share their stories or experiences past or present in which they feel God is with them and that God is true to his promises.
- Ask them to write down their concerns on a piece of paper provided for that purpose.

Closing Activity

Offering. As the offering plate is being passed, ask the small groups to place also their paper.

Closing Prayer: If there are 4 small groups, ask 4 learners to pick a piece of paper and lead the class in a prayer taking into consideration the concerns written on the paper.

The teacher may end the prayer by saying, *"We pray Lord that the kind of faith Abraham possessed be passed on to us and be also shared to others in the community. Let our faith be manifested through our life, our relationships and concern for others so that the people may see and feel your Kingdom here on earth."*



Last Sunday before
Lent
March 3, 2019

41. *Topic Title:* **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: Isaiah 35: 1-7; Luke 9:1-11; Acts 3:1-10

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 heals those who are sick in mind, body and spirit.
- God restores not only physical ailments, but also ailments of society.
- God's Kingdom means the healing of the whole person including his or her environment.
- We are called to help build a Kingdom of healing where people's life and dignity are made whole.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners will be able to:

- Identify issues that reflect the ailments of society and the environment.
- articulate the church's understanding of healing.
- Resolve to participate in the work for wholeness and healing of both society and environment.

Memory verse: Luke 9:11 "...He welcomed them and spoke to them about the Kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing."

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

Biblical Background

- *Isaiah 35: 5-7.* In the Jewish history, Isaiah is a name that has great significance. Among all the prophets, Isaiah was most quoted in the New Testament. Isaiah is also known for his rich vocabulary and imagery. He spent his prophetic days within the corridors of power. In fact, many kings call him for advises and help in terms of its political direction. Though he was known to be a 'court prophet' but he was not a mere yes-man in the halls of the kings. Isaiah was uncompromising in his message especially when he saw the signs of grave danger awaiting Judah (southern Kingdom) and its people.

The prophet Isaiah lived during the times of Judah's seemingly glorious days – when it was strong and healthy. But he also witnessed the abuse of power by the rich; of men who went around drunk; women cared more about their clothes than their neighbors' hunger and poverty. Another kind of danger looms outside the walls of Judah. Empires were growing fast and pose as great threat to Judah. Isaiah never failed to remind Judah to put their trust in the Lord rather than to make alliance with other countries for it may bring more harm than gains.

The biblical text talks about a time when God will come to restore and redeem those who suffered from the hands of the conquerors. Isaiah talks about the time when God will restore the land and people will 'see the glory of God'. Not only will the people be restored from their physical impairment – "the eyes of the blind will



be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped (vs.5); lame will leap and the mute tongue shouts (v.6). Even the land and everything in it will also be restored -waters will gush out to the desert (v.6); parched land will be glad and wilderness will rejoice and blossom (v.1). There will also be restoration of the shattered souls - gladness and joy will overtake the people, there will be no more sorrows and sighing (v.10).

Isaiah envisioned a restoration that is whole – a healing that involves not just people but even the environment as well. People will see “God’s glory” when everything is restored into wholeness.

- Luke 9:1-6,11 . Luke may not necessarily be present or haven’t known Jesus personally, but he was a dedicated convert of Christianity and must have went with Paul to several trips. In fact, Paul have fondly mentioned Luke in his writings. Luke is a gifted writer. Many would find pleasure in reading his book. Luke emphasizes on relationships between his characters.

Our biblical text is part of the account when Jesus sent his Twelve disciples to preach about the Kingdom of God; gave them power and authority to drive out demons, cure diseases and heal the sick. It is clearly pointed out by Luke that healing the sick, driving out demons and proclaiming about the Kingdom goes hand in hand. They are not separate tasks but each task is equally important from the others. The good news does not cover preaching only as well as healing means nothing if people are not informed about the Kingdom.

Peter and other apostles continued the ministry Jesus has entrusted to his disciples. They roam the cities to teach and introduce Jesus to them. Along with the proclamation, the apostles manifested the authority given them by healing the sick. (Acts 3:1-10)

- The Executive Committee of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines issued a statement on the healing ministry of the church during its meeting on August 20-27, 1987. It states, *“The UCCP engages itself in wholistic health ministry in obedience to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ for abundant life for all. Though the Church focuses her attention upon people, she cannot close her eyes to the ills of society which give rise to poverty of body and spirit. It is therefore necessary for the Church to address herself to the historic problems of domination, unequal distribution of land, inequality in economic opportunities and resources and oppression and exploitation of less privileged and marginalized Filipinos.”*

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time. Welcome the learners to the class with a warm smile.

Opening song: “Jesus Went about Doing Good”

Jesus went about doing good, the Bible tell me so
He heals the sick, and heals the blind
To little children, he was kind
He gave some hungry people food
He said to all be kind and good.
Jesus went about doing good
The Bible tells me so.



“Heal Our Land”

If my people will humble themselves, humble themselves and pray
If they seek My face and humble themselves, and turn from their wicked ways,
I will hear from heaven and forgive their sin.
I will hear from heaven and heal their land.

Chorus:

Lord heal our land, Father heal our land
Hear our cry and turn our nation back to You.
Lord, heal our land; heal us O Lord and heal our land
Forgive our sin and heal our broken land.

Opening Prayer: All embracing and loving God, we long to hear You speak to us through our experiences. Be with us today as we join our hearts and minds to study Your Word. Inspire us so that we may go out renewed in our commitment to serve You by serving the people. Amen.

Getting Ready. Ask the class if they know of someone who is sick and cannot attend Sunday School because of health reasons; or someone who has been absent for a long time. After identifying a sick person that after the session, the class will do something for them.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth.

GROUP PRESENTATION. Divide the class into two groups. Group A will be composed of all boys while Group B will be an all-girls group. Assign to each group a biblical text: Group A (Isaiah 35:1-7) Group B (Luke 9:1-6,11). Let them read the texts within their group and ask them to give a creative presentation based on their readings.

Lessons Learned. SICKNESS TREE. Using the same groupings, ask the learners to:

- Write on a piece of paper the kinds of sickness they can identify that affects individual persons, the community, world and environment. Ask them to explain why they think such **sickness** affects us as people and the environment. Tell them to paste them as leaves or branch of the tree.
- After each has posted their paper on the tree, ask the learners to identify the **ROOT CAUSES** of the sickness they identified. Again, write their responses down on a piece of paper and post on the root part of the tree

Ask the learners: “Based on our biblical texts, and looking at our tree, what does healing means to us?”

Synthesis: The Bible tells us that God intends to heal not only the physical sickness of people but also the economic, cultural, political and environment sicknesses that afflict the people and environment.

Applying the Lesson Learned



WHAT COULD WE DO? The teacher may prepare 3 sign boards with three choices. Let the learners choose on what they can do to help in the work of healing. As learners make a choice, let them hold the sign board they choose and explain.



Closing Activity

Offering

Recite the Memory Verse

Closing Prayer: You have given us Lord various gifts so that we may become proclaimers of Your Kingdom. Use us Lord to become healers of this world instead of being the cause of the sickness. Empower us and give us courage to help in taking out the root causes of the sickness that people and the world is afflicted of. We need Your presence to dwell in us always. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

First Sunday in Lent
March 10,2019

42. Topic Title: 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.

Lectionary References: Joshua 5:9-12; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32, John 6:1-14

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Age-level Concepts

- God created a world where there is enough food for all to share.
- There are hungry people because there are those who do not share.
- The Kingdom of God is about sharing.
- God mandates us to share God's abundance and blessings.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners will be able to:

- Explain the meaning of "equitable sharing".
- Demonstrate equitable sharing in the class.



- Express appreciation to God for creating the world where there is enough food for all to share.

Memory Verse: John 6:11 (NIV) “Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

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

Biblical Background

Joshua 5:9-12.

Our biblical text is considered part of the fast-paced accounts of action in battle called the “the book of war”. The book talks about a new leadership of Israel in the person of Joshua – an untested leader but a known warrior among the older generations. Joshua is going to lead a more daring generation who decided to trust God opposite to the character of the older ones who are fearful and panicked once. As we read the book of Joshua, we cannot find an instance about people rebelling against God or grumbling for several reasons. Joshua is like a “good news” book in contrast to other books like Numbers and Deuteronomy.

There are two main tasks that Joshua wanted to accomplish in his leadership: One, he is to command a military campaign against their enemies and take control of the land promised them by God. Second, to divide the land they conquered among the tribes.

v. 12 mentioned that the day people ate from the produce of the land promised them, manna stopped coming or falling for the Israelites. This account tries to tell us that from generations to generations of Israelites wandering in the wilderness, God never stopped providing them their food. Despite the grumbings of the older generations led by Moses, God remained faithful and continued to provide for their needs. This account is an affirmation that God (YAHWEH) never had an intention to let people live in hunger and poverty. God sustained them according to their needs. In one instance, along their journey, the people in fear of hunger disobeyed God’s instructions and kept manna beyond what they need for the day- a display of distrust and lack of faith.

The distribution of the land among Israel’s tribe is a concrete affirmation of God as a sustaining God. God cannot afford to see His people in need of food and live in dire poverty while the neighboring rich nations are enjoying from the riches of their conquest. It is God’s intention that people shall live from the produce of the land and not from the morsels that dropped from the table of the rich.

John 6:1-14

John has a different purpose from that of the other gospel writers – Luke, Matthew and Mark. Though they write accounts of Jesus’ miracles, John’s accounts of miracles were called “signs”. A sign tries to point to something or someone. Every miraculous work of Jesus tries to teach a lesson to the audience and for us readers. When he fed the 5000, he claimed as the “bread of life”. When he restored the sight of the blind person, he declared himself as the “light of the world”. John specifically handpicked these miracles to prove a point – that Jesus is not just like any ordinary man, he is the Son of God.

Chapter 6 of John shows how people reacted to Jesus. At first, they were amazed and awed at Jesus’ miraculous feeding of the Five thousand. With much excitement, the people wanted him to be king, but Jesus went away



from the crowd. The very next day, he rebuked them of being so concerned about the physical needs but ignoring the spiritual truth. Jesus was like explaining to them that as much as he respond to the physical needs of people, he is also offering a higher satisfaction that requires not just a miracle but faith in him as the son of God. To this litany, the people were so disappointed and started to turn away from Jesus.

John is trying to point to us that in Jesus Christ as the Son of God- the bearer of the message of the Kingdom, there is abundance and fullness of life. Jesus claiming as the “bread of life” gives assurance that physical and spiritual hunger will be filled through him. Responding to the needs of people and sharing what we have is a basic virtue in God’s Kingdom. Hunger and poverty is no longer an issue of concern in the God’s Kingdom. Greed and always getting what we want depriving the needs of others is never welcomed in God’s kingdom.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time. Welcome the learners with a warm smile as they enter the classroom. Talk about their experiences the past days.

Opening song. “It could Be a Wonderful World”
If each little child could have fresh milk each day;
If each working man had enough time to play
If each homeless person had some place to stay
It could be a wonderful world.

If there were no poor and the rich are content
If strangers were welcome wherever they went
If everyone knew what community meant
It could be a wonderful world.

Opening Prayer: We come with longing to hear Your voice speak to us, O Lord our Great Teacher. May we understand Your message for us today. Create in us an open mind and heart. Amen

Getting Ready. Before the learners arrive in class, the teacher needs to prepare a pack of biscuits and place it on a table at the center of the room. Learners may get curious of what they’re going to do with it. Tell the learners: “Today, we are going to learn about “sharing”.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Let somebody read the Background Notes for the Teacher provided for every biblical text. Questions and clarification may be raised. If not, the teacher may opt to give the following questions:

1. What is manna? How is it important to the Israelites?
2. Why do you think manna stopped coming after they ate the produce of the land?
3. Why did Jesus feed the 5000?
4. How can we connect Jesus’ miraculous feeding of 5000 to his declaration “I am the bread of life?”
5. How do we understand sharing based on the biblical stories?



Lesson Learned

Present to the class the definition of the two concepts:

Equality is defined as the quality or state of having the same rights, social status etc. regardless of actual conditions, capabilities and needs. This means that in terms of distribution or sharing, the rich and the poor will receive the same.

Equity is defined as having the same access to opportunities and development based on individual capabilities and needs. This means that in terms of distribution or sharing, the rich will only receive his/her share according to what s/he needs. Those who have less, will get also his/her share according to their needs. Both the rich and the poor will have their share but not necessarily of the same amount or portion.

Ask the learners: "How do you think resources should be distributed in order that everybody will have food on their table and to prevent the rich from become richer and the poor become poorer?"

Applying the Lessons Learned

BISCUIT SHARING. Instruct the learners to distribute the biscuit equitably and see to it that every member of the class will have their fair share.

Closing Activity

Offering. Ask the learners to come forward place their offering on the offering plate and complete the prayer.

Closing Prayer. SENTENCE PRAYER. Ask the learners to complete the sentence prayer: I thank God for creating the world in abundance and I commit to share my

_____.

Note: Instruct the learners to bring a cloth or handkerchief long enough for blindfolding.

Second Sunday in Lent
March 17, 2019

43. *Topic Title:* **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.

Lectionary References: [Isaiah 43:16-21](#); [John 12:1-8](#)

Other Appropriate References: [Psalm 34:9-14](#); [Mark 10:46-52](#)

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: [Isaiah 43:16-21](#); [Psalm 126](#); [Philippians 3:4b-14](#); [John 12:1-8](#)



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.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners will be able to:

- Differentiate between physical blindness and blindness to the harsh realities of society.
- Feel what it is to live without sight.
- Give suggestions how can one be of help to those who are blind to realities of society.

Memory verse: Isaiah 43: 19 “See, I am doing a new thing! Now, it springs up. Do you not perceive it?”

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

Biblical Background

Isaiah 43:16-21.

Beginning chapter 40 of Isaiah, harsh words of warnings from the previous writings are replaced with soft reassuring tone of comfort. Judah lies in ruins, Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews were held captive. Some 200 years separate from what is described in the early chapters of Isaiah to the latter part.

It is best to understand what happened during those years before the later Isaiah prophesied. Isaiah being a court prophet witnessed the inevitable downfall of Judah. As this was happening, Babylon slowly rise into power and eyed Judah as target for invasion. Babylon successfully invaded Judah and left Jerusalem in total wreck. Prophets at that time raised questions of why did God allow such things to happen to the chosen nation.

Isaiah chapters 40-66 shifted to another tone. Instead of fearful warnings and judgment towards the Jews, Isaiah proclaimed his prophecies full of hope and expectation of what is to come. The prophet tries to bring comfort for the downtrodden Jews and make them see that something big and new is in store for the people. God is never defeated nor abandoned them. Instead, big events are carefully planned by God.

The biblical text in Isaiah 43:16-21 urges the people to forget the past which blinded them to see what is waiting for them in the near future. The God who saved the slaves from Egypt is the same God who will deliver them from the hands of Babylon. The people were urged to acknowledge God and re-establish the relationship broken because of unfaithfulness. The people were blinded by pride and arrogance, they put their trust to earthly alliances which Isaiah had warned them against.

Mark 10:46-52.

Mark marks a distinct character in his writings. He is more dramatic in his accounts on Jesus. He doesn't dwell long on speeches but focuses more on actions to get the attention of his readers. Mark was like addressing to a restless and impatient audience. Despite the fast-paced recording of event that involves Jesus and the disciples, Mark never failed to draw people's attention to the main character-Jesus.



The biblical text seems handpicked from among other miraculous stories as accounted by the other gospel stories. It tells of a miracle performed by Jesus –giving sight to a person who is physically blind. Upon hearing about Jesus, Bartimaeus shouted and begged for help. Without hesitation Jesus, called up Bartimaeus. “What do you want me to do for you?” (v.51) “ I want to see.” (v.51) “Go, your faith has healed you.” (v.52) are striking statements. Though Mark successfully delivered the story as quick as it can be, but he did not miss out the message he wanted to convey to the audience and readers as well.

Healing those who are incapacitated – like blindness is indeed a concern of the Messiah. But in the process of healing, one has to recognize his/ her condition, that there is something wrong with him/her that needs help; Secondly, one has to recognize what kind of help they need; thirdly, one has to have faith in order to be healed. Blindness could be a physical weakness or could be condition wherein one refuse to see or recognize realities. “Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? (8:18). Either way, one has to have faith that opens up the blinded eyes. Faith is necessary to healing. One cannot see without faith.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time. Welcome the learners to the class with a smile.

Opening Song: “Buta”

Pagkadaghan sa nahigmata nga nangandoy pang matulog
Kay mas tam-is ang magdamgo sa mga dili tinuod
Ang saksi sa kamatuoran, mopiyong lang kasagaran
Ug mag-antus lang nga pasipad-an
Ang gugma ug kaangayan.

Refrain:

Buta kita sa pagpakabana ,Buta kita sa luha
Ug way pulos ang hayag sa atong mga mata
Kung sa kasingkasing magpabilin tang buta.

Kung ikaw ang makasaksi sa mga pag-antus sa uban
Nganong dili ka mosulti, nganong wa kay baruganan
Ang saksi sa kamatuoran, mopiyong lang kasagaran
Ug mag-antus lang nga pasipad-an ang gugma ug kaangayan. (Refrain)

“It’s a Great thing To Praise the Lord”

It’s a great thing to praise the Lord
It’s a great thing to praise the Lord
It’s a great thing to praise the Lord
Walking in the light of God.
Walk ,walk, walk in the Light, walk, walk, walk in the Light
Walk, walk, walk, in the Light. Walking in the Light of God.



Opening Prayer: Our Loving God, the Source of Light in the world. Make our eyes see and understand what is happening around us. May Your Word help us from our blindness. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen

Getting Ready.

WHAT IS IT? (Game)

Instruct the learners to seat forming a big circle. Everyone should be blindfolded except for the teacher. The teacher will pass around something or make them smell something while blindfolded. After each has touched or smelled the object, ask them what it is. Those who can guess first will be allowed to take off their blindfold.

Ask them: "Was it easy to identify the object when you cannot see it?"

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth. Let somebody read aloud the biblical texts. Ask the learners respond to the following questions:

Isaiah 43:16-21

1. What is it that the people of Judah are blinded from?
2. What is it that God wanted the people to see?

Mark 10:46-52

1. Who did Jesus heal in the story?
2. Why did Jesus ask what the blind man needs?
3. How can we say that the blind man has faith that heals?

Lessons Learned

Say: "Our biblical texts tell us that there are different kinds of blindness – the physical blindness and blindness from refusing to see realities. Let us try to differentiate these two kinds of blindness."

Divide the class into two. Give each group a piece of paper. Ask Group 1 to describe a person who is physically blind, his/her feelings and involvement in society. Group 2 will describe a person who is blind to realities of society, his/her feelings and involvement in society. Ask them to share to the class their work.

Ask them: "To what kind of blindness do people at present belong to? Are we also blind?"

Applying the Lessons Learned

Let them pick a statement provided for them and let them explain in their own words. Always end up the discussion with the question, "What can you possibly do to help the blind?"

A blind
cannot lead a
blind!

They have eyes
but refuse to
see, have ears
but refuse to
hear!



Closing Activity

Offering.

Closing Prayer: Take us out of our blindness Lord and make us see what is happening around us. Heal us from our blindness so that we may see You in the face of those who are in need. Give us always eyes to see and ears to hear. Teach us to help those who are blind.
Amen

Third Sunday in Lent

March 24, 2019

44. Topic Title: 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.

Lectionary References: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Luke 4:18-19

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 19:28-40

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.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners will be able to:

- Give examples of how people are oppressed or situations which we may considered oppressive.
- Discuss what God's intention is for the people.
- Resolve to take the side of the oppressed and participate in the call for release of those unjustly imprisoned.

Memory Verse: Luke 4:18 "the Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed."

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

Biblical Background

Isaiah 50:4-9a

As we already mentioned in the previous lessons, "Isaiah chapters 40-66 shifted to another tone. Instead of fearful warnings and judgment towards the Jews, Isaiah proclaimed his prophecies full of hope and expectation of what is to come. The prophet tries to bring comfort for the downtrodden Jews and make them see that something big and new is in store for the people. God is never defeated nor abandoned them. Instead, big events are carefully planned by God.

Isaiah always tell about predictions of the coming events – the rise of someone who will be instrumental for the freedom of those who remained faithful to God. Isaiah mentioned also about a Messiah, a suffering servant through whom God will show his power. The book of Isaiah never fails to remind Israel of their intended destiny – to be the



light to the nations and to bring God's salvation to the ends of the earth. This intention was declared since the beginning of the covenant with Abraham.

The biblical text in Isaiah 50 mentioned about Israel's sin and how God protects and helped the obedient servant. With God's protection, according to the servant, no one can condemn him nor disgrace him. The text tries to remind Israel to put their trust back and rely on God. God intends to save them from their suffering and pain, from the oppression they suffered from the hands of their invaders despite their sin. God intends to free them from their captivity through whatever means and whomever God can send.

Psalm 31:9-16.

The psalm tells of a person in dire need of someone's help; someone in distress, anguish and affliction, a person who receives threat from enemies. The psalm invokes God's mercy and unfailing love to deliver him from his situation. This implies that freedom and deliverance from all that hold them captive and oppressed comes from God because God cannot allow his people to live in oppression and utter distress. From the start of the covenant relationship, God always hear the cry of the people and delivered them out from their bondage and captivity.

Luke 4:18-19

This biblical text was directly taken out from the Old Testament quoted by Jesus as he starts teaching in the synagogue. This declaration emphasizes that Jesus' words and works from that day on has something to do with God's intention even before. It signifies the continuity of God's work in the lives of the people. The agenda of Christ is in fact God's agenda to save his people. Jesus' declaration being sent by the Spirit of the Lord is in a way a declaration that he is the fulfillment of the prophecies in the Scripture. The end that Jesus' life and work is trying to achieve is the same as that of God is trying to achieve – for people to live within the covenant relationship with God.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time. Welcome all learners with a warm smile. Talk with them about their experiences that makes them sad or angry. You may talk also about recent news they've heard or seen on television that gives impact on them.

Opening Song

"Hymn of Human Rights" (Tune: Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee")

Road to Reversal: Advent and Christmas Manual. Guide to Celebration 1990

Lead us Father, into freedom from despair your world release

That redeemed from war and hatred Men may come and go in peace.

Show us how through care and goodness, fear will die and hope increase.

Show us how through care and goodness, fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living, Let it from the earth be banned

Pride of status, race or schooling, dogmas keeping man from man

In our common quest for justice, may we hallow life's brief span

In our common quest for justice, may we hallow life's brief span.

Opening Prayer: "God of life and history, we come here today to talk about our experiences and share with our friends in faith our joys and pains. May we hear you today speak to us as we study Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen



Getting Ready

UNTANGLE. (Game) Prepare a long rope enough for the class to hold on to. Ask 4 learners to get out of the room while the rest will form a circle while holding the rope. Make a puzzle by entangling the rope together with the person holding it. One learner may cross over, pass under, exchange places or whatever. Learners must not let go of the rope.

Then, ask the 4 learners who went out to come and join the class. The 4 learners will be the problem solvers. Ask them to untangle the rope until all learners will go back forming a circle while still holding the rope.

Process the game. Ask them the following:

1. What is it easy to untangle the rope with the learners holding it? Why?
2. How does it feel being inside or part of the tangled rope?
3. How does it feel being unable to solve the problem?

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth. Divide the class into three groups. Each group be given a biblical text to read and be asked to respond to the questions.

Group 1 - Isaiah 50:4-9a.

- a. Underline the words or phrases that describe a situation/condition of people that needs rescuing or help.
- b. Discuss within the small group why were those phrases were chosen? Explain.
- c. Can you see a similar situations today? Explain.

Group 2 - Psalm 31:9-16

- a. Underline the words or phrases that describe a situation/condition of people that needs rescuing or help.
- b. Discuss within the small group why were those phrases were chosen? Explain.
- c. Can you see a similar situations today? Explain.

Group 3 – Luke 4:18-19

- a. Underline the words or phrases that describe a situation/condition of people that needs rescuing or help.
- b. Discuss within the small group why were those phrases were chosen? Explain.
- c. Can you see a similar situations today? Explain.

Lessons Learned

Ask the learners to respond to the following:

1. Why do you think God hears the cry of the oppressed, distressed and afflicted people?
2. What do you think is God's intention for the people to experience and have?
3. Whose side do you think Jesus has taken?
4. Read the UCCP statement provided below. Whose side do you think the church should take?



EPISTLE TO THE CHRISTIANS TODAY

General Assembly

May 21-26, 1978

Therefore ,

We reiterate to stand for genuine human development seeking solidarity with the people in their struggles for justice and liberation;

We urge all to take the positive steps towards the protection of our environment from agricultural and industrial exploitation and desolation.

To encourage the formation and strengthening of people's organizations to ensure popular participation in decision-makings;

We call upon the institutional church to fulfill its commitment of identification with the deprived, the enslaved, the accused and the despised;

We seek the peace that can only spring from situations where "justice roll down like a mighty stream" and development take cognizance of the dignity of people.

Applying Lessons Learned

Ask to make a statement or a declaration of their faith in relation to the lesson today. Let them make a scroll and let them write it down on the scroll. Write "Our Epistle to Christians Today".

OUR EPISTLE TO CHRISTIANS TODAY

WE, members of the Youth Sunday School class of UCCP -
_____ resolve today that:



Closing Activity

Offering. Ask the learners to bring their offering to the center of the classroom where the offering plate will be placed. Include to bring the class scroll to the center.

Closing Prayer. Ask someone to read the class scroll to close the session. Everybody will say “Amen” after the reading.

