

# Vision

A responsible, empowered, self-reliant and caring community of Christian believers committed to the pursuit of a transformed church and society towards an abundant and meaningful life for all.

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## Lesson 11: Why do we need to become an empowered church?

### Mission Sunday

First Sunday in Kingdomtide

August 25, 2019

**General Concept:** We need to be an empowered church for us to be able to sustain our vigor and passion amidst challenges and struggles.

**Biblical References:** Jeremiah 1:4-10, Isaiah 58:9b-14, Luke 13:10-17

### Age Level Concepts

- We need to be an empowered church for us to be able to sustain our vigor and passion to do our mandated tasks.
- Being an empowered Church, we can withstand challenges and struggles of our time.

### Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Mention examples and experiences of struggles and challenges the Church has faced.
- Share their feelings during those times of struggles and how they have overcome the challenges.
- Firmly affirm that the Church needs the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to sustain its vigor and passion amidst challenges

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

### Biblical Background

Jeremiah 1:4-10

The text is about Jeremiah's call to become a prophet; a call which he is far from eager to accept. The reason he cited for his indifference to the call was his young age. God, however, did not allow Jeremiah's youth to hinder him from receiving his duty. All throughout the Bible we see God calling people to serve God in their youth. Jeremiah was called to do a gargantuan prophetic task which was probably one of the reasons that made him refuse God's call. He was sent over nations to pluck up, break down, destroy, overthrow, and build and plant in accordance to God's plans. Of the six verb imperatives, four speak of judgment and only two speak of the promise of restoration. These imperatives indicate that Jeremiah's ministry will center mainly on God's judgment of Israel because of their hardheartedness. His messages of doom and judgment resulted to severe persecution. His own kin wanted to kill him. He suffered much because of the message God called on him to proclaim. This resulted to him having a love-hate relationship with his prophetic task. He complains to God about the difficulties of being a prophet but we never

hear God chastising him for such. In the end, his faith prevailed even as he died as an exile in the land of Egypt. God's promise of being with Jeremiah wherever he goes enabled the prophet to do his task.

#### Isaiah 58:9 -14

Isaiah 58 is a part of the work of the Third Isaiah which covers Isaiah 56-66. The writing of Third Isaiah is addressed to the post-exile community of Israel. After having returned from exile in Babylon, the Israelites are trying to rebuild and start a new life. Making a new life was not easy since they were beset with various forms of conflict ranging from leadership issues to divisions and violence in the new community. Isaiah 58 focuses on how they are to work as a community. The prophet reminds them on how they ought to relate with God and with their neighbors. Frequent but insincere worship will not persuade God to help them in rebuilding their shattered lives. The fasting that God requires, as mentioned in verse 6, is for them to remove the bonds of wickedness and to do what is right and just. When all these are done, it is only then that God will rejoice. Isaiah is trying to emphasize that it is only with God present in their lives and doing what God requires of them can they fully rebuild their life as a people and nation.

#### Luke 13:10-17

This passage is about the healing of a woman who was bent over for eighteen years. The healing of the woman happened in the synagogue during the Sabbath day. The law of the Sabbath says that no work must be done during this day. The Jewish leaders were infuriated at what Jesus did. Jesus responded to their anger by using the imagery of the untying of the ox. The term *untie* has been used several times in the Gospel to express the cancellation of someone's sin, transgression or penalty. The healing of the woman shows that the community can either be the cause of disease or the agent of healing. Thus, a question is being raised. What kind of community should the Church be? Jesus' act of healing the woman on a Sabbath is a challenge to the religious authorities at that time but is the ultimate proof that the greatest law is love and concern for the needy and the downtrodden.

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn "Balaan Nga Espiritu" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 180  
(O Holy Spirit Rouse Your Church)

O Holy spirit rouse your church, from apathy and idleness,  
Make us aware of changing times that threatens all of humankind.

O Holy Spirit shake your church, to face the evils of our days,  
What hinders us we cast aside, our minds be changed to do your will.

Opening Prayer

Breathe on us O Holy Spirit. Stir us from our complacency. Teach us to look into our lives and see if we have been faithful and obedient to you. Just as we study

the Scripture, may we also be able to look into the life and journey of our church.  
Amen

### **Learning Time**

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read Jeremiah 1:4-10

- What kind of a person did God call?
- What were the challenges faced by the person called by God?
- What did God do to the person being called?
- What can a person who is called by God do?

Read Isaiah 58:9b-14

- What particular concerns and struggles of the people were being raised in the prophecy?
- What were the conditions set by God for people to fulfill?
- How would God's presence be manifested in the life of the people?

Read Luke 13:10-17

- Who was the intended audience of the miracle?
- What kind of a spirit did Jesus try to confront in this account?
- What kind of a spirit did Jesus try to manifest for his audience to see?

Lessons Learned

Small Group Sharing. Group the learners into smaller groups of 4. Tell them to share within their group the following:

- Personal struggles and challenges faced as a follower of Christ.
  - How were you able to overcome these struggles and challenges?
- The challenges and struggles faced by their local church.
  - How did your local church able to confront and overcome the challenges and struggles it faced?
- The challenges and struggles faced by UCCP in general.
  - How can UCCP be able to overcome the challenges and struggles it is facing today?
- How was God's presence manifested in the different challenges we faced?

Applying the Lessons Learned

Ask the small groups to share a summary of what they have shared and discussed. At the end of their sharing tell them to finish the statement, "We need \_\_\_\_\_ to be able to sustain the vigor and passion of God's people amidst struggles and challenges we face today."

### **Closing Worship**

Offertory

Closing Hymn "God always Leads Me" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 176

God always leads me, blessed thought!  
O words of comfort, often sought,  
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,  
It is always God's hand guiding me.  
God always leads me through life's storm  
Wherever in the world I roam  
A faithful follower I would be  
For it is God's hands leading me.

Sometimes amidst the deepest gloom  
Sometimes when lovely flowers bloom  
By waters calm or troubled sea  
It is always God's hand guiding me.  
God always leads me through life's storm  
Wherever in the world I roam  
A faithful follower I would be  
For it is God's hands leading me.

#### Closing Prayer

We trust that you will be there to give us strength when times seem to put us down and weaken our faith. We firmly believe that we need your empowering Spirit to keep the flame of our faith alive and burning. Fill us always Lord, fill us with your Spirit we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen

#### **Lesson 12: What is a self-reliant church?**

Second Sunday in Kingdomtide  
September 1, 2019

**General Concept:** A self-reliant church is self-sustaining and optimizes its available resources.

**Biblical References:** Psalm 112: 5-9, Hebrews 13:16

#### **Age Level Concepts**

- Our Church can rely on itself to sustain its life and work.
- A self-reliant Church is self-sustaining and optimizes its available resources to support the implementation of its programs and plans.

#### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Discuss how resources can be optimized to sustain the life and work of the Church.
- Explain the importance of giving as mandated by the Church in order to support the implementation of its programs and plans.
- Commit to promote the development campaigns of the Church.

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

### **Biblical Background**

Psalm 112:5-9

Psalm 112 proclaims that the fruit of glorifying God is joy and happiness. Glorifying God is manifested not in empty rituals but in wholeheartedly obeying God's commands. Obedience begets blessings which are then poured down upon God's people. These blessings must be shared and experienced by all of God's creation, especially the poor. In order to be true to God's mandate, the Church should teach us that blessings must be shared with others and be used to sustain life.

Hebrews 13:16

The writer of Hebrews contemplated on the power of Christ's sacrifice. He asks Christians to have a benevolent character. In response to Christ's sacrifice, every follower and believer must also offer their own type of sacrifice which is that of service to God and of doing good deeds.

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn "Give of Your Best to the Master" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 282

Give of your best to the Master  
Give of the strength of your youth  
Throw your soul's flesh, glowing ardor  
Into the battle of truth.  
Jesus has set the example  
Fearless was he young and brave,  
Give him your loyal devotion  
Give him the best that you have.

Refrain: Give of your best to the Master  
Give of the strength of your youth  
Clad in salvation's full armor  
Join in the battle for truth.

Opening Prayer

We are gathered in this place Lord, to worship, fellowship and study. We are glad to have been given the opportunity to look into the life of our church and draw inspiration from its experiences. We are truly grateful for the blessings we received each day. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

#### **Learning Time**

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read Psalm 112: 5-9

- Who is referred to as the “righteous” in the psalm?
- What would happen to the “righteous” according to the psalm?
- What can the “righteous” possibly do?

Read Hebrews 13:16

- What is the concern being raised in verse 16?
- How would you interpret this confession in your own words?
- What can church people do knowing that God is their helper?

#### Lessons Learned

IDENTIFY CHURCH RESOURCES. Divide the learners into small groups.

- Tell the groups to list down resources (material, skills, gifts) the church has.
- How can these resources become useful to sustain the church’s programs and plans?
- How can these resources be optimized to sustain the church’s programs and plans?

#### Applying the Lessons Learned

Ask: “Do you think our church is self-reliant or self-sustaining? How?”

“What can we do as members to achieve our aspiration to become a self-reliant church? Give suggestions.

#### Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn “Give of Your Best to the Master” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 282

Give of your best to the Master  
Give Him first place in your heart  
Give Him first place in your service  
Consecrate every part.  
Give and to you shall be given  
God his beloved Son gave  
Gratefully seeking to serve him  
Give Him the best that you have.

Refrain: Give of your best to the Master  
Give of the strength of your youth  
Clad in salvation’s full armor  
Join in the battle for truth.

#### Closing Prayer

We strive to become a self-sustaining church, Lord, hoping to make use of our resources to support the implementation of programs and plans. Help us to be more generous. May our cheerful giving become a manifestation of our support worthy of your appreciation. We all do these, in your name. Amen

## Lesson 13: Why do we need to become a self-reliant church?

Third Sunday in Kingdomtide  
September 8, 2019

**General Concept:** We have to be self-reliant to be able to sustain and fully support our ministry.

**Biblical References:** Deuteronomy 30:15-16, Luke 14: 31-32

### Age Level Concepts

- The Church attends to its needs and solves its own problems.
- We have to be self-reliant to be able to sustain and fully support our ministries.

### Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Read the Church Plan for self-reliance made in 1974.
- Express their opinions and comments on the development plans of the Church today.
- Recognize the value of such action made by the Church.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]) song chart, offering plate or basket, copies of the Self-reliant Plan of UCCP, 1974, bond paper, tape

### Biblical Background

Deuteronomy 30:16-15

These passages are part of the third speech of Moses to the Israelites. In here, Moses sets before the Israelites choices about how to live their lives. This text reminds us that one of our God-given abilities is the ability to make choices and decisions in life. Moses does not explicitly tell the Israelites what the best choice is but he instead pressed the people to love God and obey God's commands. In doing so, they will reap the rewards of long-life and abundance. Throughout the Book of Deuteronomy, faithfulness and obedience to God is deeply emphasized. Faithfulness to God will bring about blessings that will ensure the endless sustenance of life.

Luke 14:31-32

The parable is about a king who plans to wage war against another king. His forces cannot match the force of his opponent so instead of fighting, the weaker king sends messengers to the stronger king for peace talks. Jesus is using hyperbolic language to emphasize the cost of discipleship.

### Suggested Lesson Outline

#### Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn "Spirit, Open My Heart" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 294

Chorus: Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living

As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving.  
Spirit, open my heart.

God, replace my stony heart with a heart that's kind and tender.  
All my coldness and fear to your grace I now surrender.

#### Opening Prayer

Open our hearts O Lord and make us active listeners to your Word. Help us today as we look at the Church's plan and how the church journeyed towards becoming a self-sustaining community of believers. Help us locate ourselves in this journey so that we may also understand our tasks and roles. Amen

#### Learning Time

##### Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read Deuteronomy 30:15-16

- What does the text tries to remind people of?
- What was God's plan for those that obey?
- What were the expectations set by God for the people to fulfill?

Read Luke 14: 31-32

- Who were the intended audience of the parable?
- What was the parable all about?
- What were the advantages of having a plan according to the parable?

##### Lessons Learned

THE UCCP SELF-RELIANT PLAN vis a vis UCCP DEVELOPMENT THRUSTS.  
Provide copies of the UCCP SELF-RELIANCE PLAN and UCCP Development Thrusts for study and appreciation.

## **FIVE YEARS SELF-RELIANCE PLAN**

*Executive Committee*

*5-7 December 1974*

**NAME OF PROJECT:** FIVE (5) YEARS SELF-RELIANCE PLAN

#### **OBJECTIVE**

To make the United Church of Christ in the Philippines fully self-supporting and self-reliant in the carrying out of its ministries after five years from 1 975.

#### **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

1. To obtain from supporting churches in America, namely: UCMS, UCBWM, UPC-USA for five years to be invested for earning purposes.
2. To raise local resources apart from the one million pesos fund campaign the amount of P100,000.00 annually for five years.

#### **IN RESTROSPECT : ANALYSIS OF THE 10 YEARS SUBSIDY TO THE UCCP**

<b>Years</b>	<b>In Dollars</b>	<b>\$-P Rate</b>	<b>Peso Equivalent</b>
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1974	\$ 70,000.00	P 6.70	P 502,005.54
1973	68,132.36	6.70	456,486.00
1973	92,949.46	6.55	635,019.00
1971	121,921.11	6.40	780,295.13
1970	176,158.36	3.90	687,017.63
1979	159,347.00	3.90	621,453.32
1968	159,937.00	3.88	620,555.56
1967	164,495.95	3.87	636,599.36
1966	169,407.29	3.87	655,606.25
1965	173,817.03	3.87	672,671.91
1964	165,262.33	3.87	639,567.56
<b>10 years</b>	<b><u>\$1,525,989.49</u></b>		<b><u>P 6,405,272.54</u></b>

From 1964 to 1974 the United Church of Christ in the Philippines received from the Boards \$1,525,989.49 or P6,405,272.54. There is no iota of a doubt the UCCP sustained its commitment to the Gospel ministry very actively and meaningfully because of the funds that came from the cooperating Boards. Of course both UCCP and the churches in the United States represented by the Cooperating Boards are agreed that these funds, while channeled through the churches in the United States, are basically (theologically) God's money. There is no denying the fact however, that the giving churches specially lately have felt the pinch of the tight money situation. The UCCP does not want to abuse, however, the stewardship of our partners in mission in the United States. Like them we would also like to mature fully in our stewardship of God's money.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

If the partnership of the US churches and the UCCP continues to be the same, the UCCP will forever be dependent upon them for financial support. Whether the churches in the USA can sustain this dependency is very hard to tell. Changes in both attitudes and structures may make it more and more difficult for the cooperating Boards to continue nurturing, as a child, the UCCP. National politics, cosmic economic and social situations may drastically and adversely affect this relationship.

### **A PROPOSAL**

A new proposed system of partnership therefore between the cooperating Boards and the UCCP has to be evolved before the *night* comes.

### **RATIONALE**

The traditional system of aid gave donors the final say in the specific use of every penny they sent. It was the donors who decided whether a certain program was still relevant or not. But now donors cannot ignore the techniques available for bringing new benefits with dollar aid. These are:

#### **1. Increased financial efficiency**

An investment of say P1 million pesos earns a minimum amount of P120,000.00 a year forever. In thirty years the same total amount can have created a permanent income of three times the annual amount. The effects snowball. On the other hand a million pesos in annual gifts will last only 10 years.

#### **2. Increased selfhood and emotional self-reliance** is the best gift of all, far transcending the immediate physical benefits of annual gifts. Everything has its price - in this case extra work for the donors are:

- a. to give attention to the form of the investment.
- b. establish with receivers a careful form of words, to be written into the constitution of the investment, on how the income may be used. This must be specific enough to give a real flexibility to the receiver, that is, the income shall be used for all or any of the programs of the UCCP, or for any subsequent UCCP plans in the areas of education, community development, evangelism, etc.

Donor agencies sometimes fear that:

1. Their constituency will not give towards general programs;
2. That they will not be consulted on specific implementation of the general plans;
3. That they will not receive reports.

None of these fears need materialize. An effort in clear education and good subsequent reporting will persuade the man *in the pew* of the overwhelming advantages of the new form of aid, and the receiving church or churches usually welcome consultation, especially so when they do not *feel* threatened.

The ministries to be supported by the UCCP after it has attained sufficiency and self-support are, primarily, the following:

1. ***Continuing Leadership Development***

- a. theological education scholarships
- b. teachers education scholarships
- c. hospital personnel scholarships
- d. agricultural technicians scholarships
- e. scholarship to upgrade personnel
- f. non-theological education
- g. other personnel training

2. ***Christian Education***

- a. production of indigenous Christian Education materials
- b. annual training of Sunday School teachers
- c. youth work
- d. women's work
- e. men's work

3. ***Church Growth*** (Evangelism)

- a. equipping the UCCP constituency for service
- b. increasing UCCP membership
- c. production of materials in evangelism, stewardship, etc.

4. Assisting ***Church-related schools*** improve school plants, curricula offerings

5. Continuing ***research*** to pinpoint weaknesses and strengths of UCCP's ministries in order to improve its program concerns, thus making those concerns humanizing and meaningful to people

6. ***Home Mission programs*** in cultural communities

- a. organization of settlement areas for the people in cultural communities
- b. literacy programs
- c. economic (agricultural), medical programs
- d. helping the people in the survey and titling of their properties

7. ***International Ecclesiological Relationships***

- a. Ecumenical sharing of funds and personnel (ESF)
- b. Christian Church in Asia participation (CCA)
- c. World Council of Churches participation (WCC)
- d. Alliance of Reformed Churches Participation (WMC)

8. ***Pension*** and Retirement for Church workers

9. ***Development programs*** among the *poorest of the poor*

10. Continuing church ***leadership training***

11. Assisting calamity victims in their ***emergency needs*** and in rehabilitation

12. ***Salary subsidy*** for Moderators and other church workers working among the *poorest of the poor*.

74-237 VOTED: That the 5-year Self-Reliance Plan (Appendix VI) be presented to Philippine Joint Action Group as the only project proposal from the United Church of Christ in the Philippines; provided that this action shall not prejudice the askings and/or project proposals, already submitted and favorably responded to, including, but not limited to the case of Union Christian College School of Nursing.

## VIII. The UCCP Thrusts in Development

Thrusts are salient elements or objectives that are meant to provide guidance in specific areas of concern. These directional thrusts are based on the development principles and cover specific times frames and areas. The thrusts are defined by a concrete analysis of the prevailing and immense conditions that obstruct, misdirect and even threaten development work in a given period and place. Thrusts are further based on the available resources, capabilities and urgent needs and demands of the Church and the people's organizations.

At this point in time, development efforts need to confront and respond to a number of pressing issues, problems and challenges perverting genuine development among the majority of the Filipino people.

### 1. **Protect and Support the Gains/Achievements of the Democratic Movement Among the Disadvantaged Filipino Sectors.**

Over the years, the formation of people's organizations has significantly advanced in terms of quantity and quality. A good number of programs and projects of the poor sectors among the peasants, workers, urban poor, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, women, etc., have considerably flourished at the community levels in the various regions of the country. These gains were not achieved overnight. These communities were built through tedious and pains-taking efforts by the people themselves who not only sacrificed sweat but also their own blood in the process.

These gains at the community level are under constant threats of being sapped or eroded from external and internal forces. For one, the state's 'total war' policy which got its inspiration from the 'low intensity conflict' strategy of the U.S. perpetuated a state of terror in the countryside. With the revival of the anti-communism hysteria, the anti-insurgency campaigns have exposed the basic masses to state sanctioned repression. Hence, arrests and detentions, tortures and summary executions of organizers and the people themselves are becoming commonplace events. This is further intensified by fanning the flames of terrorism as a façade for the state to have more police power in order for the people to toe the government line.

More undermining threats to the people's gains are encountered in such tactics as in 'low intensity democracy' strategies where limited democratic movements are encouraged to a certain extent to 'win the hearts and minds' of the people. Multilateral partnerships through so-called 'civil society' is broached as an alternative to the people's organization. Through the joint efforts of the NGOs, the business sectors and the GO, more social and development services will be plowed to the grassroots communities. These strategies will continue to weaken and even wipe out the development projects in the grassroots level in pursuant to the people's agenda. This would gradually supplant whatever empowerment gains the people's organizations have earned.

The church should explore and continue to establish strong partnership relationships with the grassroots communities. The institutional church realizes the potential capabilities of the disadvantaged sectors if they are given the proper understanding and tools needed for transformation. The church should work for the people's social network and support their organizing efforts for genuine empowerment. It should serve as a catalyst for the grassroots communities endeavors of integrating varied development concerns through socio-economic work.

### 2. **Responding to Calamities and Disasters**

That which have become a 'fact-of-life' as a people are the phenomenal occurrences of human-made disasters and natural calamities. It is noteworthy that even in high risks, calamity-prone areas, people are able to survive in spite of the absence of coping mechanisms and support processes from outside. But it might have some

impact if the people are prepared for such occurrences together with the rehabilitation of their socio-economic lives would start from their experiences.

Human-made disasters brought about mainly by military and paramilitary counterinsurgency and 'development clearing' operations, constitute the principal and more frequent cause of wholesale dislocations of communities. The expansive rural areas are subjected to aerial and ground bombardments followed by arsons, lootings forcing the people to evacuation centers or hamlets of the government and the so-called development prospective intruders. A large segment of the people are constrained in their socio-economic work and fallen victims to the war in the countrysides.

Natural calamities caused by typhoons, earthquakes, floods are recurring for relief measures. However, graft and corruption, inefficient state bureaucracy, petty partisan politics which typifies government-ran relief and rehabilitation efforts, makes the more urgent the task for the church and other agencies to respond to the situation of the affected people.

The church and the people's organizations should embark on action programs for people's preparedness and actual service deliveries to these calamity- and disaster-stricken areas. Preparing the church and POs in responding to these events would entail joining their respective resources both human and material in order to come up with an efficient and effective management of the situation. Relief services should not focus on the people's hopelessness in such situations but should be built on the people's capabilities to rebuild their own lives. Patronage and dole-out dependency should be discouraged. Resources for these activities are always insufficient and the neediest among the victims should be given prioritization.

In situations where human-made disaster occur, fundamental causes of war and other aggressions should be looked into and the persistent inability of traditional institution to assist the people in such

### **3. Advancing the Socio-Economic of the Suffering People**

The earning capacities of the people have been pushed down to subsistence levels. Continued suppression of the people's economic and political rights have only aggravated and deepened the economic crisis. The current state policies on privatizing of profitable state industries, trade and investment liberalization, increasing debts, unhampered foreign exchange flow have resulted to the neglect of land reform, widening trade deficit and increase in prices of domestic goods.

The Church and the POs should join efforts at evolving and promoting viable socio-economic alternative system. The system evolved should grow from where the people are and recognize traditional socio-economic-cultural background of the people. The aim is to develop associative economics and build strong (community and regional) economic that can meaningfully and substantially respond to the basic needs of the majority of our people.

### **4. Enriching Development Theories and Practice**

Most development agencies and POs lack sufficient coordination of activities to systematize its proficiency to pursue in-depth studies on the wealth of development work experiences. The need to ensure that development work will not be coopted by the elite but will be continually guided by a theory which is relevant to the people's struggle against under development, responsive to the actual needs of the people and ensure democratic participation of the greatest number of the people toward their empowerment.

In this light, the church and people's organization should develop a system of coordination and facilitation of activities on a sustained basis, such as: sharing of programs/projects experiences among networks, learning lessons from experiences, improving program capabilities and information exchange on development concerns with other partners here and overseas. This network and linkages could provide support and coordination of activity in different region of the country.

### **5. Addressing the Problem of Environmental Disorder and Destruction**

The state's policies and programs on environmental protection and conservation have continued to be ineffective due to its inherent motives of economic exploitation such as: exports of natural resources for foreign and local elite needs, promotion of cash crops in place of subsistence food crops, etc.). The twin results of

present anarchy unhampered profit oriented economic production and environmental destruction have threatened the majority of the Filipino people who are poor to the brink of survival similar to the disappearing species of plants and animals.

In this context, the linkage of the Church and People's Organization on development work should strive to integrate and permeate the environmental question in all socio-economic and development emphasis. The achievements of socio-economic and development work are mutually linked with the capacity of the ecological life-system to survive.

## **6. Establishing Strong Local and International Partnership Cooperation**

There are a number of good areas on development work where local and international partnership cooperations are essential. Considering that our people's struggle for true human existence is faced by a common local and international devilish structures of greed, exploitation and oppression, development work in the country is a contribution to the just cause for life globally.

Cooperation in the field of advocacy, projections of the Philippine sectoral and multi-sectoral issues and demands, sharing of material, financial, technical and human resources will surely enhance the advance of development and socio-economic work.

The Church and People's Organizations should encourage and strengthen local and international relations and develop viable mechanisms through which local and foreign networks can reach covenant relations on development programs in the country.

After reading the material, the facilitator may ask the following:

- What are the points of similarities you can find in both materials provided?
- How would you justify the recent development plan of the Church based on the developmental thrusts of UCCP?
- What conclusions can you draw out from the development thrusts of the church?
- Do you believe our aspiration to become a self-reliant church can be realized? How?

Applying the Lessons Learned

Ask the learners to write on a piece of paper provided for them the advantages of having a plan. Let the learners post it on the board for all to see. Synthesize their responses and wrap up the discussion by citing the key concepts of the lesson.

### **Closing Worship**

Offertory

Closing Hymn

“Great Is Their Faithfulness” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 49

Great is your faithfulness, O God Creator

With you no shadow of turning we see.

You do not change, our compassions they fail not;

All of your goodness forever will be.

Refrain: Great is your faithfulness, great is your faithfulness  
Morning by morning new mercies I see  
All I have needed your hands has provided  
Great is your faithfulness, God unto me!

#### Closing Prayer

We strive to grow as a church by using our capacities and capabilities which were considered gifts from you O Lord. Teach us to be more discerning and responsive to others' needs. Teach us to use our resources well and guide us in our journey towards becoming a self-sustaining and self-reliant church. Amen

### **Lesson 14: What does it mean to be a caring church?**

Fourth Sunday in Kingdomtide  
September 15, 2019

**General Concept:** A caring church expresses concern for and empathy towards others by responding to their needs.

**Biblical References:** 1 Timothy 1:14, Luke 15:1-5

#### **Age Level Concepts**

- A caring church expresses concern for and empathy towards others by responding to their needs.
- We are a caring Church.

#### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Identify the programs and ministries of the Church that expresses its being a caring community.
- Evaluate the participation of the whole community in its caring ministry.
- Discuss ways of how the Church can become more effective in its caring ministry.

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

#### **Biblical Background**

1Timothy 1:14

First Timothy puts forth stipulations for Church life. Paul recounts who he was prior to his calling and conversion. He described himself as a blasphemer, a persecutor and a fanatical enemy who through God's grace and mercy was transformed into a faithful follower of the Gospel. This transformation, which came from God's immeasurable grace, led to thankfulness and gratitude. Paul used his own testimony of life to teach others and instill in them the truth of God's love and mercy.

Luke 15:1-5

Luke 15 opens with a description of the contrasting effect that Jesus has on people. Tax collectors and sinners are drawn to Jesus while the religious authorities abhor him. The Pharisees scorned Jesus for sharing a meal with people he considered unclean and unworthy. In most culture, sharing a meal is a sign of inclusivity and hospitality. The parable of the lost sheep was told by Jesus as a way of rebuking the hostile and heartless attitude of the Pharisees. This parable puts across the message that caring for others is not an option but an imperative of our faith.

*In its mission statement, the UCCP declared that “health is a basic human right. The Church engages itself in wholistic health ministry in obedience to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ for abundant life for all.” Aside from engaging itself in health programs and activities through its healing institutions, the Church believed that it cannot “close her eyes to the ills of society which give rise to poverty of body and spirit.” The problem on health is not detached from other social problems that plagued the people. The health programs can only be effective if other social problems that ills society are addressed.*

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn “A Common Love”

Refrain:

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 joy, in the truth of God’s Word.

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 comfort each care we can  
build each one’s faith; we can work, we can share. (Repeat refrain)

In God’s family all the love that we show, all the help that we give; all the life  
we bestow. As God’s children there are offerings we make; not expecting  
return; just a gift for God’s sake. (Repeat refrain)

Opening Prayer

We are grateful O Lord for the care you’ve shown us. You made us see the light  
of day, feel the warmth of the sun, enjoyed the company of friends and loved  
ones and gave us the opportunity to care for others. Enlighten us through your  
Spirit as we continue to know and understand the aspirations of our church.  
Amen

## Learning time

### Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read 1 Timothy 1:14, Luke 15:1-5

- How does the text in 1 Timothy describe God's grace?
- Who do you think are considered 'lost' in the parable?
- How should we treat the "lost" according to the parable?
- How does Jesus show his care to people who are lost?

Read Genesis 18:1-10

- What makes that day special for Abraham and Sarah?
- How did they treat their visitors?
- What do you think was the purpose of the visit?
  
- What does it mean to be "caring?"
- Can you see manifestations of being caring in our church today?

### Lessons Learned

A caring church expresses concern for and empathy towards others by responding to their needs.

- Identifying Programs and Ministries. Divide the learners into groups. Tell them to identify locally implemented programs and ministries that expresses empathy and concern for others consistent to the program of the Church.

UCCP PROGRAM/ MINISTRIES	LOCAL CHURCH PROGRAM EXPRESSION	PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS (poor or active)	WAYS TO BECOME MORE EFFECTIVE
<b>Healing Ministry</b>			
<b>Justice, Peace and Human Rights</b>			
<b>Christian Education and Nurture</b>			
<b>Community Ministry</b>			
<b>Migrant Ministry</b>			
<b>Partnerships and Ecumenical Relations</b>			

Ask the groups to present their table to the class.

- What are the contributing factors for the poor or active participation of members in its caring ministry?
- How do you feel about the result of the assessment made by the groups?

Applying the Lessons Learned

- Collate the suggestions of the different groups as to how to become more effective in its caring ministry.
- Let them finish the declaration: "WE ARE A CARING CHURCH BECAUSE WE \_\_\_\_\_."

### Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn "What Our Nation Needs" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 377  
( Atong Nasud Nagkinahanglan)

What our nation needs are people who have the commitment for service  
Who with willing hearts gladly offer their own lives so others may live.

Refrain: Let's work together to attain our common vision,  
This is the will of our loving and compassionate God.

A community's aspiration is for lives of peace and order  
And the beauty of relating with each other in full harmony.

Closing Prayer

Loving and compassionate God, you have called us to care for others just as we receive care from you. Stir us O Lord from apathy and shake us from being numb to the plight of your people. Grant us your forgiveness and mercy. In Jesus' name. Amen

### Lesson 15: Why do we need to become a caring church?

Fifth Sunday in Kingdomtide  
September 22, 2019

**General Concept:** We have to be a caring church because that is our mandate as children of God and is the appropriate response to the call of the times.

**Biblical References:** Jeremiah 8:21-22, Psalm 113:5-9, John 5:1-14

### Age Level Concepts

- We have to be a caring Church because that is our mandate as children of God.

- We have to be a caring church because that is the appropriate response to the call of the times.
- Being a caring church is our collective expression of obedience to God's will.

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Discuss why the Church needs to be a caring community
- Share experiences and situations where the Church has effectively responded to the needs of the people
- Suggest more ways on how the Church can be a caring community.
- Commit themselves to the work of caring for others as an act of obedience to God

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

### **Biblical Background**

Jeremiah 8:21-22

Jeremiah is a kind of prophet who holds nothing back from God. He expresses his anguish and laments to God. These laments, however, are not manifestations of unbelief but rather it shows how deeply he cares for God's people. In verse 21, he expresses his grief over Israel's arrogance and perpetual unfaithfulness. In here, we see Jeremiah's sensitivity to the misfortunes of Israel amid their incessant waywardness. He is fully aware that God's judgment is imminent and though he knows this, he continues to hope that there will be a remedy for Israel's malady. He continues to care for God's people despite the persecutions he suffered. The Church should embrace the same character.

Psalms 113:5-9

This Psalm declares that God is worthy of praise. The psalmist asks "Who is like the Lord our God?" In the succeeding verses, the psalmist shows how there is no one like God. This is a hymn calling the community of faith to offer the highest praise to God for everything that God has done. God continued to show his care, mercy and love despite disobedience and unfaithfulness of the people.

John 5:1-14

The sight of the poor, helpless, and seemingly hopeless sick and disabled people around the pool of Bethesda would surely break anyone's heart. It did break Jesus' heart seeing those people in their inhuman situation with no one caring for them. For Jesus, such a situation is one reason for his coming down to earth – to break the chains of apathy and to give the people what they needed – HEALING. "Do you want to get well? Get up! Pick up your mat and walk" are statements of concern for people to experience new life. Caring for people is helping them to be free from their old life of shame and disgrace to a life full of grace and mercy. Thus the name of the place *Bethesda or Beth hesda – a place of shame and disgrace for the sick people, and also a place of grace and mercy through Jesus who healed and cared for them.* Jesus has a soft heart for those in dire need of attention, care and healing – a virtue which he tries to teach and for his disciples to emulate.

## Suggested Lesson Outline

### Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn "We Want to Learn to Live in Love" Children Praise God, 126

We want to learn to live in love  
To follow what is good and true  
Through friends at church, at home, at play  
We find what God would have us do.

When we are sad or feeling mean  
And fail to love or to be fair  
Our friends at church, at home, at play  
Can help us know that God does care.

When others are unkind to us  
And make us want to cry or fight  
We can reach out to be good friends  
And help them know that love is right.

Opening Prayer

Our most loving God, you called us to be your people who are willing to embrace the life exemplified by Jesus. Make us understand your words O Lord through our study today. May we find meaning in what we're going to learn today. Amen

### Learning time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read Jeremiah 8:21-22

- How would you describe the words of the prophet?
- What could have happened during his time?
- What does the prophet try to find from the people?

Read Psalm 79:8-9, Psalm 113:5-9

- What kind of a God is being portrayed in the psalms?
- Why do people seek God?
- What are the manifestations of how God cares for the people in need?

Read John 5:1-14

- What concerns Jesus when he went to Bethesda?
- What could be the factors that lead to such condition of the people in that place?
- How did Jesus respond to what he witnessed?
- What important message Jesus wanted the hearers and those who witnessed to learn?

## Lessons Learned

Ask: "Why should we become a caring church?"

- Our biblical accounts portrayed a God who cares and responds to the needs of the people. Jesus himself demonstrated that great concern for people who have been neglected by society and those in power. It is undeniable that God through Jesus Christ is a God that is loving, compassionate, caring and kind.
- We need to care for others because the God who called us shows care and concern to all especially those in dire need.
- Our care and concern is our expression of obedience to God who called and cares for us.

SHARING OF EXPERIENCES. Ask the learners to share their experience where they or the church have responded to the needs of people. How do you feel about it?

## Applying the Lessons Learned

Give situations or concerns of people to the learners. Ask the learners to suggest ways how the church can effectively respond.

- Victims of calamity
- Street children
- Evacuation of Lumad people
- Polluted rivers and streams
- Mining exploration near the water shed
- Cybersex and exploitation of children
- Addiction of people to drugs
- Extra judicial killings
- Health and public services

## Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn "Does Jesus Care?" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 198

Does Jesus care when my heart is pained,  
Too deeply for mirth and song as the burdens press  
and the cares distress and the way grows weary and long.

Refrain:

O yes, he cares I know he cares  
His heart is touched by my grief  
When the days are weary, the long nights dreary  
I know my savior cares. He cares.

Closing Prayer

We are grateful for the care we experienced every day. We see situations around us that need our response and help. Enliven in us O Lord the Spirit to

care for others regardless of their race, color, beliefs and social status. This we pray in Jesus Christ, Amen.

### **Lesson 16: What is a community of Christian believers?**

Sixth Sunday in Kingdomtide  
September 29, 2019

**General Concept:** The community of Christian believers is a gathered people who profess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

**Biblical References:** I Timothy 6:11b-15, 18-19, Matthew 16:13-20

#### **Age Level Concepts**

- We are Christians.
- We profess Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.
- We are a community of believers gathered in the name of Jesus Christ.

#### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Profess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
- Cite examples of how the early Christian Church lived out their faith in Jesus Christ.
- Suggest ways of how Christians today can manifest their being a community of Christian believers.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]) song chart, offering plate or basket, pieces of paper, ballpens or pencils

#### **Biblical Background**

I Timothy 6:11b-15, 18-19

The passage contains Paul's reminder to Timothy to be steadfast in his faith amid all the dangers and temptations of life. Paul reminds Timothy of how true Christians conduct themselves. The riches of the world should not be the foundation of one's security. One's trust must be in God for God owns everything. Our faith in God must be manifested in acts of kindness and generosity.

Matthew 16:13-20

These passages contain one of Jesus' most powerful teachings to his disciples. Here, he asked them: "Who do people say I am? Who do you say I am?" The question of Jesus' identity has always been at core of the Gospel accounts. Even opponents wonder about his identity and where his authority came from. Answers to his first question included names of key people from Old Testament. The answers to Jesus' first question denote that God's creating and liberating power transcends time. The message of God reverberates through the various moments of history. For the second question, Peter answered, "You are the Messiah." Peter answered correctly. Followers of Christ need to have a strong conviction and faith in him. To start the

mission of proclaiming God's kingdom, we have to start with the strong belief that Jesus is the Messiah.

## **Suggested Lesson Outline**

### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn "Ginawaak Manema" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 42

Ginawaak Manema, ines inged, ines inged

Ginawaak Manema, ines inged, ines inged

Tinged kini igbagayden andas anak den

Kended en pamentuan sa kanden

Dirig, dirig, dirig kataren

Taman sa taman, taman sa taman,

Taman sa taman, taman sa taman.

What great love Creator God has for the world, has for the world

What great love Creator God has for the world, has for the world

That God gave unto the world God's own beloved Son.

So that all who would believe in him

Never, never, ever would be lost

But live forever, but live forever,

But live forever, but live forever.

### **Opening Prayer**

Our loving and most gracious God, you gathered us women and men,  
young and old to declare our faith in you as our Lord and Redeemer.

Accept us in your presence and grant us wisdom as we talk about our  
being a believer today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

### **Learning Time**

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read I Timothy 6:11b-15, 18-19

- Who was the intended reader of this letter by Paul?
- What could have been the problems encountered by Timothy that prompts Paul to write?
- What were Paul's reminders to the believer in Christ?
- How should Christian believers live out their beliefs?

Read Matthew 16:13-20

- How do people respond to the question as to who Jesus was?
- Who was Jesus according to Peter's declaration?
- What was the impact of Peter's declaration to people who did not know Jesus?
- How should believers make known their belief in Christ?

### Lessons Learned

PERSONAL STATEMENT. Give each learner a piece of paper. Ask them to write their own confession about Jesus. Let each of them read their confession for everybody to hear.

### Applying the Lessons Learned

Ask the following:

- Why do you believe in Jesus Christ?"
- "What makes you a Christian believer?"
- How can Christian believers profess their faith to others? Suggest ways.

### Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn "I Love to Tell the Story" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 309

I love to tell the story of unseen things above,  
Of Jesus radiant glory, of Jesus' endless love.  
I love to tell the story, because I know it's true,  
It satisfies my longings as nothing else can do.

Refrain: I love to tell the story, and when I am in glory,  
I'll tell the old, old story of Jesus' endless love.

I love to tell the story, more wonderful it seems,  
Than all the golden visions of all our golden dreams.  
I love to tell the story, I tell it now to you,  
Because I want to share it, because I know it's true.

### Closing Prayer

We declare today that You are our Lord and the Christ, the Redeemer of all people. You brought us together in your love and mercy. Help us Lord, to become a faithful witness of your salvific action and grant that our lives may become a worthy testament of your grace. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

### Lesson 17: What does it mean to be a Christian believer?

Seventh Sunday in Kingdomtide  
October 6, 2019

**General Concept:** To be a Christian believer means to follow and embody Jesus Christ's way of life and ministry.

**Biblical References:** Lamentations 3:25-26, II Timothy 1: 3-14, Luke 17:5-6

### **Age Level Concepts**

- A Christian believer embodies Jesus' way of life as an expression of her/his faith.
- A Christian believer actively participates in doing Christ's mission in the world.

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Mention the kind of ministry Jesus did and the kind of people He ministered to.
- Discuss the barriers that hinder people to follow Jesus' kind of life and ministry.
- Share experiences of how they have participated in the ministry of Christ.
- Commit to follow Christ more closely.

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

### **Biblical Background**

Lamentations 3:25-26

The book of Lamentations is attributed to Jeremiah. It expresses the mournful reaction to the destruction of the temple and the downfall of Jerusalem which took place in 586 BC. The destruction was deemed by Jeremiah as God's judgment over Israel for continually ignoring and rejecting God's call to repentance. In here, we see the remorseful feeling that the people are beginning to feel. In verses 25-26, the writer reminds the people of the following:

- God is the only source of hope.
- God is merciful upon those who put their trust in him.
- People must wait patiently for God's salvation

Waiting does not mean sitting idly and doing nothing. In waiting for God's salvation, every believer ought to persist in keeping their faith alive. No matter how hopeless the situation is, the writer continues to tell the people to keep on hoping.

Luke 17:5-6

Jesus has described what it takes to follow him. One who prioritizes family matters on top of everything or one who cannot carry his/her own cross cannot be Christ's follower. In Greek grammar, verse 6 is actually a criticism of the disciples' faith. The size of the disciples' faith cannot even be compared to that of a mustard seed. The increasing of one's' faith is not an easy task. Yet, it is a task every disciple should accomplish. Strong and profound faith comes from deep ruminations of one's encounter with God and with the wider community in his or her daily life.

2 Timothy 1:3-14

2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy seems like a final letter to a close friend. Paul penned this letter to urge Timothy to continue his faith and to offer his life as an example for others to emulate. Paul articulated that faith cannot be placed in a storage, it must be lived. The word of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ must be proclaimed even in the face of persecution.

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn “Jesus Calls Us, O’er the Tumult” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 284

Jesus calls us, o’er the tumult of your life’s wild restless sea,  
Day by day that voice still calls us, saying, “Christian, follow me.”

Jesus calls us from the worship of the treasures we adore  
From each idol that would keep us, saying, “Christian, love me more.”

In our joys and in our sorrows, days of toil and hours of ease,  
Jesus calls in cares and pleasures, “Christian love me more than these.”

Opening Prayer

Merciful Savior, we thank you for calling us your people, a body of believers that works to follow Christ’s way of life, bind us today with your wisdom so that our study may be meaningful for all. In Jesus’ name, we pray, Amen

**Learning Time**

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read Lamentations 3:25-26

- How was God being portrayed in this text?
- What should a believer do?

Read Luke 17:5-6

- How would you compare faith to the mustard seed?
- What can faith do?
- What does it mean to be a believer?

Read 2 Timothy 1: 3-14

- Who was addressed by the letter of Paul?
- What were the significance of those mentioned by Paul in his letter to the life and faith of the young worker?
- According to the letter, what examples can a Christian believer demonstrate to others?

Lessons Learned

Small Groupings. Divide the learners into small groups and ask them to list down the ministries that Jesus did and to whom it was administered .Identify the barriers that hinder us from following Christ’s ministry.

JESUS’ MINISTRY	BARRIERS/HINDRANCES for following Christ’s ministry

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### Applying the Lessons Learned

- Ask: “What values of a Christian believer that you have inherited or learned from your upbringing and surrounding?” Ask the learners to share their experiences/ stories to the group.
- What can we do personally and as a church to show the life of a Christian believer is like?

### Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn

“I Would Be True” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 281

I would be true for there are those who trust me  
 I would be pure for there are those who care  
 I would be strong for there is much to suffer  
 I would be brave for there is much to dare  
 I would be brave for there is much to dare.

I would be friend of all, the foe, the friendless  
 I would be giving and forget the gift  
 I would be humble for I know my weakness  
 I would look up and laugh and love and live  
 I would look up and laugh and love and live.

I would be prayerful through each busy moment  
 I would be constantly in touch with God  
 I would be tuned to sense God’s slightest whisper  
 I would have faith to keep the path Christ’s trod  
 I would have faith to keep the path Christ’s trod.

Closing Prayer

The path Christ prepared for us may be very hard to follow, Lord but we believe that as people being called to participate in his mission, we ask your Spirit to empower us to live a life like Christ and serve the people like Christ. This we pray, in Jesus’ name, Amen.

### Lesson 18: What is transformation?

Eighth Sunday in Kingdomtide  
 October 13, 2019

**General Concept:** Transformation is the process towards radical change.

**Biblical References:** II Kings 5:1-3, 7-15, Luke 17:11-19

### **Age Level Concepts**

- Transformation is the process towards radical change of conditions, situations, and appearances.
- Transformation can be achieved when people unite and work for it.

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Discuss what transformation is in contrast to the present context in society
- Suggest ways or processes that can be used to achieve transformation
- Give reasons why there is a need for transformation
- Resolve to accept and participate in the processes towards radical change

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

### **Biblical Background**

2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15

Naaman's healing is one of the miracles of Elisha. This miracle story is remarkable as it shows that God's power to transform goes beyond national boundaries and status in life. Naaman was a commander of the King of Aram while his slave and Elisha were Israelites. Naaman has wealth and power while the unnamed slave girl had none. Yet this young girl dared to speak her mind and voice out her suggestion for Naaman's healing. This slave girl points Naaman to the healing power of God and gives him hope. The story clearly tells us that every person regardless of status, age, or race can be an instrument of God through which transformation can be achieved.

Luke 17:11-19

These verses show how much Jesus cares for the marginalized. The 10 lepers did not really come near Jesus. They simply called out to him from a distance. How can they come near to him when they were deemed by society as outcasts? Out of the 10 lepers, the one who came back to thank Jesus after having been healed must have experienced greater marginalization amongst the group seeing as he was a foreigner. The story ultimately culminates with the foreigner being told to "Get up and go." This command indicates that a momentous transformation is about to happen. To tell the leper to "Get up and go" is also a command for him to really manifest God's transforming power in a person's life through faithful service and in proclaiming God's love and mercy to all.

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn

"Time to Change"

It's time for us to make our dreams come true

A guiding voice will tell us what to do,

It's the time to change ourselves and show the world  
That we still care for all, and we'll lead them there.

We'll lead them to a place beyond the sea  
A place of love where everyone is free  
Don't despair the path to happiness is wide  
If we must change our ways call on God for our guide.

#### Opening Prayer

God of change, you call us to be doers of the Word and not just listeners. We ask your abiding presence as we study things that are with relevance to our life and faith as a church. May our discussions help edify our beliefs and prepare us to change. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

### Learning Time

#### Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read II Kings 5:1-3, 7-15

- How would you explain the attitude of the King of Israel based on the story?
- What can you say about Naaman?
- What do you think leads to the healing and eventual change of Naaman?
- How should we understand "transformation" based on the story of Naaman?

Read Luke 17:11-19

- What was the story all about?
- How would you compare the attitude of the nine lepers from that of the one who came back?
- How should we understand transformation based on the story of Jesus and the ten lepers?

#### Lessons Learned

##### DISCUSS.

- How do we understand the word "transformation"?
- What are the conditions and situations of life and people that need to be transformed?
- Why do you think these life -situations, conditions and ways need transformation?

Synthesize the responses of the learners.

#### Applying the Lessons Learned

- Ask the learners to give suggestions as to the ways or processes that can be used to achieve transformation.

- What can you give as an expression of our commitment for the realization of transformation?

### **Closing Worship**

Offertory

Closing Hymn      “Prayer of Saint Francis”

Make me a channel of your peace  
Where there is hatred let me bring your love  
Where there is injury your pardon Lord,  
When there is doubt, true faith in you.

Make me a channel of your peace  
Where there’s despair in life, let me bring hope  
Where there is darkness only light  
Where there is sadness ever joy.

Chorus: O Master grant that I may never seek  
So much to be consoled as to console  
To be understood as to understand,  
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace,  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned  
In giving to everyone that we receive  
And in dying that we’re born to eternal life. (Chorus)

Closing Prayer

Most loving and merciful God, help us face changes that may come our way.  
Make us more vigilant and critical to situations, events and ways of life that  
needs to be transformed. Make our practice consistent to what we believe in.  
We commit to participate in the work for transformation. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

### **Lesson 19: What does it mean to be transformed?**

Ninth Sunday in Kingdomtide  
October 20, 2019

**General Concept:** To be transformed means the radical change of persons, relationships and structures.

**Biblical References:** Jeremiah 31:27-34, Psalm 119:97-104, Romans 12:1-2

#### **Age Level Concept/s**

- To be transformed means radical change of persons, things, relationships and structures.

#### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Discuss the difference between reformation and transformation
- Identify situations, people, things, relationships and structures that need transformation
- Point out reasons why transformation is hard to achieve
- Actively involved in the work for transformation

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

### **Biblical Background**

Jeremiah 31:27-34

This biblical account portrays God's promise of restoration to a broken people, coupled with a new covenant. During the time of Jeremiah, the people lived through the demise of their nation when the Babylonians invaded Judah, destroyed Jerusalem, and reduced the temple to rubble. The invaders also exiled, killed, and brought suffering to majority of the population. All that they had left were taken and everyone fought to survive. Why did something like this happen?

God had destroyed Judah and Jerusalem for their sinfulness, specifically because of the unjustness of their rulers. But God had not abandoned the people. God spoke to Jeremiah and through him, had reassured his people that the same God who planted the Garden of Eden and created humanity from its soil will replant Judah. God will replant, tend, and nurture human and animal life amid the ashes of Judah, and Jerusalem.

In verse 31:29, God promises to cease holding subsequent generations responsible for the transgressions of previous ones: "In those days they shall no longer say, 'The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.'" Instead, "...all shall die for their own sins; the teeth of everyone who eats sour grapes shall be set on edge." The remission of the sin of the past generations gives the survivors and their descendants an opportunity to start their lives over with God, as they rebuild their homes and nation. This is the new covenant that accompanied God's promise. Here, God is willing to start over with them and make it easier for God's people to keep the covenant; this time God will engrave the law on their hearts (verse 33). They will not have to be told to know the LORD; for the knowledge of the LORD will be implanted within them.

Psalms 119:97-104

This text presents the consequence of loving God's laws or commandments. Because he had faithfully adhered to God's commandment, the psalmist made good decisions and had acted in his best conduct. His observance of God's commandments had made him wiser than his enemies, for they refused to follow it and pursued paths that would eventually lead to their ruin. He valued God's commandments as if it was his most treasured possession in life. The psalmist's understanding and insight exceeded that of all his teachers combined. He attributed this to his faith in God's promises, never neglecting to think about them.

## Romans 12:1-2

Romans 12:1-2 is the transition to the last major segment of this Epistle to the Romans. The doctrinal foundation for the Christian life has been laid down in the first 11 chapters. Now, in chapters 12-15, Paul spelt out some of the ways that our faith in God and the church's doctrines could be demonstrated in our daily lives. These transitional verses introduce us to the attitudes and actions which should set the Christian apart from the others in the world he lives in. In Jewish traditions, Jews were required to observe a complex system of animal sacrifices to atone for their sins and to remind the people of said sins. Only animals without blemish were acceptable offerings (Leviticus 23:18).

The Christians in Rome to whom Paul is writing this epistle for are mostly Gentiles, and feel no obligation to offer animal sacrifices. Paul tells them, however, that they have a sacrificial obligation that far surpasses that of the animal sacrifices required by Jewish law. Instead of sacrificing the animal, Christians are called to give up their own lives instead. This requirement, however, does not call for ritual slaughter, but is instead the representation of a living person dedicating their life to the service of God; such a life is one that is lived in faith and lived out in faithfulness.

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn            “Awit ng Sakada”

Bakit kaya nagkaganyan ang ating kapaligiran  
Ngayon dito ay luhaan, kahit saan may tangisan.  
Bakit kaya naghihirap yaong mga lumilikha  
Ng yaman ng ating bansa, tayong mga manggagawa.

Koro: Tanong ko sa inyo’y isa lamang mga kaibigan ko  
Tanong ko ay pakinggan Nyo  
Saan tayo patutungo, saan mula rito.

Ngunit magbabago ang lahat kung tayo ay syang gaganap  
Lakbayin natin kahit may kalayuan ang maaliwalas na daan  
Sampung bundok man ang hadlang sa ating paroroonan  
Bungkalin natin hanggang sa mawala tayong lahat ay lalaya.

Koro: Tanong ko sa inyo’y iba naman mga kaibigan ko  
Tanong ko ay pakinggan n’yo  
Kailan tayo patutungo, doon mula rito.

Opening Prayer

We are grateful to you for giving us this day O Lord. Thank you for bringing us here to worship, fellowship and learn from each other. Pour out your Spirit in us and within us so that we may find meaning in what we do. In Jesus' name. Amen

## Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read Jeremiah 31:27-34

- Who do you think was addressed by this prophecy?
- How would you differentiate the old covenant and the new covenant between God and the people?
- What are the manifestations of transformation in people, things, relationships and structures based on the text?

Read Psalm 119:97-104

- What does the psalmist try to impress on the reader?
- What causes the change in the life of the psalmist?
- How was the life of the psalmist changed?

Read Romans 12:1-2

- To whom was the letter addressed?
- How does "new life" being described in the text?
- How can transformation be achieved as suggested by Paul?

Lessons Learned

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION. Divide the learners into three:

Group 1: Ask: "What is the difference between reformation and transformation?"

Group 2: Ask:

- "What situations, things, relationships, lifestyles and structures which you think need to be transformed?"
- "Who are the persons or people that need to be transformed?"

Group 3: Ask: "What do you think are the factors or reasons why transformation is so hard to achieve?"

Let the group share their responses to the questions. The facilitator should always synthesize all discussions.

Applying the Lessons Learned

Transformation is a process by which persons, relationships, things, systems and structures are changed completely or radically to establish a better and just social order, a life in abundance and whole.

Ask: How would you use what you have learned to invite others to get involve in the work for transformation?

### **Closing Worship**

Offertory

Closing Hymn “Hagit sa Ebanghelyo” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 364

Ang hagit sa ebanghelyo alang kanato

Higugmaon ta ang atong isigkatawo

Apan kon tinud-on ta ang pagserbisyo

Mosubay tag kalbaryo sama sa atong Ginoo.

Refrain: Dili sayon ang pagsunod kang Kristo

Daghang tunok ang dalan nga again mo

Bug-at ang krus nga pagapas-anon mo

Ug kamatayon naa naghulat kanato.

Closing Prayer

In a society whose priority is power, pleasure and possession with no concern to the plight of the poor and the deprived, we pray that transformation may happen O Lord. Forgive us if we have become a people of this world. Help us to renew our minds and be transformed by you Spirit. May we become actively involved in the work for change despite the hardship and challenges. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen

### **Lesson 20: What is a transformed church?**

Tenth Sunday in Kingdomtide

October 27, 2019

**General Concept:** A transformed church is a church whose perspective and life-ministry is attuned with Christ’s.

**Biblical References:** Joel 2:28-29, Psalm 84:1-2, 2 Corinthians 5: 16-17

#### **Age Level Concepts**

- A transformed church is a church whose perspective and life-ministry is attuned with Christ’s.
- A transformed church has radically changed itself in order to become effective and relevant in its life and mission.

#### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Give their ideas on what a transformed church should be vis-à-vis Jesus’ perspective and ministry
- Identify church actions, programs, policies and/or plans that manifest the characteristics of being a transformed church

- Resolve to support plans, programs, initiatives and/or ongoing activities of the church that are geared towards transforming the church

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

### **Biblical Background**

Joel 2:28-29

The book of Joel portrays two complementary parts: the call for repentance (2:12-13) and the eschatological expectation for transformation (2:28-30). The first showed an urgent plea for people to return to the Lord, while the second emphasized the promise that man's repentance might give rise to the gift of the spirit. In 2:28-29, it is being highlighted that the empowering of divine spirit will occur "upon all flesh." The writer then explains what is meant by "all flesh" through the use of noun pairs and verbs such as, prophesy, dream, and envision. The noun pairs refer to the members of a household (the heirs, sons and daughters, old and young men) which might indicate that in every generation, every gender will have access to the divine will that was usually reserved only for the privileged. The prophet, thus, extended the empowering work of God's Spirit to both genders. This would even mean that slaves, both male and female, would also have divine access through the spirit.

Psalm 84:1-2 was usually viewed as a poetic account of the experience of a pilgrim approaching the temple in Jerusalem for a religious festival. The sense of excitement and awe must have been so overwhelming when the exalted city first came into view. But, what makes going there so "special" and "different" from anything the person has done is that they are stepping into the dwelling place of the "Lord of hosts" (verse 1). Referring to God in this manner is reminiscent of the stories about the Ark of the Covenant where God is invisible but present in a real way amongst his people. This "Lord of hosts" is also the "living God" (verse 2) who is dynamic, at work, and active in the very life of his creations. Thus, the excitement found in the psalm is not purely just about going to Jerusalem, but was more about who and what could be found there, which is the very presence of God. It is because of God's presence that the psalmist had gone on to say that, "Happy are those who live in your house" (verse 4). Even the birds seek to be in the presence of God and thus find homes among God's altars (verse 3).

Philippians 2:4-5P

Paul gives four reasons why Christians should have greater unity between them: the encouragement given them by Christ; the power of Christ's love working in them; the common sharing they have in the same Spirit; and the sympathetic kindness that God's children should show to each other. Although the Philippians bring joy to Paul but that joy will not be complete till there is genuine unity among them. They are not to be concerned solely with their own spiritual progress for this can lead to self-satisfaction and pride. They must also learn to look for and admire the good points of others (3-4).

If they are indeed "in Christ Jesus", they should share his spirit of humility and humility means denying self for the sake of serving others. Christ did not selfishly grasp the glory of heaven rather he became a servant for the sake of humankind.

## Suggested Lesson Outline

### Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn "A United and Uniting Church" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 244

Refrain:

A united and uniting church that we may all be one  
Reformed and transforming in mission and in faith  
Onward UCCP, building God's Kingdom of peace.

Come, let us all remember, a heritage of faithfulness  
Of ardent men and women, devoted to Christ's way  
Covenanting as one together, with God's Spirit sole enabler.

Come, let's reclaim together the vision of the pioneers  
To serve beyond all burdens, reach out to one and all  
In obedience to God's divine will, we seek for the reign of God.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, together we seek knowledge and understanding of how we should respond to your call. You know us as we are, our weaknesses and strengths yet you poured out your Spirit to empower us. Continue to enlighten us as we study today your Word. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

### Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read Joel 2:28-29, Psalm 84:1-2

- To whom shall the Spirit of God be poured out?
- What are the outcomes when the Spirit of God is poured out?

Read Philippians 2:4-5, Luke 18: 15-17

- What is your understanding of the words, "same mind...that was in Christ Jesus?"
- What are the characteristics of a church whose mind is same as that of Jesus Christ?

Lessons Learned

- POST IT. Give out meta cards to the learners (meta cards must be in blue and yellow . Written in each meta card is a statement related to being a transformed church and that of Jesus' perspective and ministry. Ask them to determine if the statement reflects Jesus' perspective or the church's perspective. Let each learner post their card on the board. Instruct them that cards of the same color should be posted together.

Statements:

**JESUS' PERSPECTIVE AND MINISTRY**  
(Yellow)

Good news to the poor
Proclaim release to the captives
Recovery of sight to the blind
Healing the sick
freedom for the oppressed
Feeding the hungry
Kingdom of God

**CHURCH'S PERSPECTIVE**  
(Blue)

Feeding the hungry
Healing the sick
Concern for the needy
Justice for the poor
Concern for God's Creation
Empowerment of the oppressed
Kingdom of God

**Applying the Lessons Learned**

- Ask the learners to list down or mention the programs or ministries of the church that manifest the characteristics of a transformed church.  
Remember, a transformed church
  - is a church whose perspective and life-ministry is attuned with Christ's.
  - has radically changed itself in order to become effective and relevant in its life and mission.
- What can we do to make our local church become a transformed church?

**Closing Worship**

Offertory

Closing Hymn "A United and Uniting Church" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 244

A united and uniting church that we may all be one  
Reformed and transforming, in mission and in faith  
Onward UCCP, building God's kingdom of peace.

Come, dreamers, visionaries, examples of true witnesses  
Leaving the trace of footprints, for people to tread on  
With a burning faith and commitment  
Proclaiming God's message of love.

Closing Prayer

May we become worthy to be called your church O Lord. May you find our actions, plans and undertakings effective in ushering in your reign. Equip us with

the necessary tools to build a transformed society by becoming a transformed church. In Jesus' name , we pray. Amen

### **Lesson 21: What is a transformed society?**

#### **Trinity Sunday**

Eleventh Sunday in Kingdomtide

November 3, 2019

**General Concept:** A transformed society is just and compassionate, and is where genuine peace prevails.

**Biblical References:** Isaiah 1:16-17, 2 Thessalonians 1:3

#### **Age Level Concepts**

- A transformed society is just and compassionate, and is where genuine peace prevails.
- All people should unite themselves to pursue the work for a transformed society.

#### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Study the policy statements of the church on justice, peace, human rights and integrity of creation
- Discuss how the church lives out these stances and declarations as a response to societal issues
- Resolve that the Church should actively involve in the work for the transformation of society

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

#### **Biblical Background**

Isaiah 1:16-17

Isaiah 1:16-17 refers to God's demand for people's moral amendments. God, being tired of their people's worthless plea of outward religiousness, goes on to declare, through the mouth of their prophet, what they require. First, in general terms, God tells them that the people were to wash themselves to make them clean (ver. 16), and then with distinct specification, also bids man to "Cease to do evil; learn to do well" (ver. 17). God, in saying so, asks men to change their ways, both negatively ("cease to do evil") and positively ("learn to do well"). And, if someone has really changed, then God will surely reward them with forgiveness and blessings; but, if man continues to rebel against God's words, "the sword will devour them." In other words, God calls for the moral transformation of mankind and lays down the true conditions which man has to meet to earn his favor once more.

2 Thessalonians 1:3

This epistle shows what a principal occasion of joy is to the faithful; it is the faith and love, patience and constancy of the people to whom they work and serve with. The apostle's words here are admirable since it aims to encourage other churches to carry on. He placed much emphasis in the emulation of other churches of the Thessalonians who he highly praised. And by virtue of this, he had also encouraged the Thessalonians by telling them how much he had praised them in the hearing of the churches. The Apostle realized himself, under a special debt of gratitude to God for that which His grace had wrought in the Thessalonians that the faithfulness of this Church had cheered and sustained the Apostle in times of trials and darkness. Timothy therefore confirmed and testified to an extraordinary growth in Thessalonian faith. This was due to two causes: due to the practical and energetic character of their faith from the beginning (1 Thessalonians 1:3); and due to their cheer remaining despite the persecution they had undergone.

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn        "If I Had A Hammer"

If I had a hammer, I'd hammer in the morning  
I'd hammer in the evening, all over this land  
I'd hammer out danger, I'd hammer out warning  
I'd hammer out love between my brothers and my sisters  
O-oh, all over this land.

If I had a bell, I'd ring it in the morning  
I'd hammer in the evening, all over this land  
I'd ring out danger, I'd ring out warning  
I'd ring out love between my brothers and my sisters  
O-oh, all over this land.

If I had song, I'd sing it in the morning  
I'd sing out in the evening, all over this land  
I'd sing out danger, I'd sing out warning  
I'd sing out love between my brothers and my sisters  
O-oh, all over this land.

If I had a hammer and I had a bell  
And I had a song to sing all over this land  
It's the hammer of justice, it's the bell of freedom  
It's the song of love between my brothers and my sisters  
O-oh, all over this land.

Opening Prayer

Our compassionate and just God, we come as people with aspirations to live in a society where there is peace and abundance. We longed to be freed from our suffering and desperation. Teach us Lord to understand your will for us. May we feel your presence today as we continue to study and discern your message for us. This we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen

### **Learning Time**

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read Isaiah 1:16-17

- To whom do you think the message was addressed?
- How would you describe the world that God intends people to live in?
- What conditions of life of the people or what images of life and people described in the text are experienced today?
- How are they being experienced?
- What message can we learn from this text that is relevant for us today?

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4

- To whom was the letter being addressed?
- What were the reasons for the writer to boast about the Christians in Thessalonica?
- Can we find the same characteristics of the community in Thessalonica in our church today?

Lessons Learned

Our church recognizes that our society is ill and broken in a sense that people are suffering, deprived and in dire need of help. The kind of life people are living in is not what God intends for all to have. The gap between the poor and the rich has greatly widened; there is disrespect of the rights of people; deprivation of basic services; signs of chaos and conflict are visible and felt; and abuse of the environment is anomalous. The church takes it as its prophetic role to proclaim God's will for all of creation – the life of shalom.

Let us study and reflect on the various declarations of the church related to issues confronting society:

## **A STATEMENT OF SOCIAL CONCERN**

*General Assembly*

*19-24 May 1960*

### **INTRODUCTORY THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT**

Throughout Asia today, people and their governments are in the midst of a political, economic and religious upheaval. The tremors of this upheaval have shaken the old foundations of Asian culture and are making way for

the building of new political, economic, and religious structures. It is imperative that the Church ask herself what her role is in this new day.

The church cannot hold itself aloof from the world in which it lives. Even as the Lord of the church came **not to be ministered unto, but to minister**, so He calls His disciples to be His servant-people. (John 13:14-17). They are **called to witness and to serve Christ in the world**. (Acts 1:8; Matthew 20:26-28). It is through its members that the church **confronts the world** at all points of daily life. (II Cor. 5:17-20). Even as Christ came **that men might have life and have it abundantly**, (John 10:10), so Christians are **to bear witness to this and have been called from the world into a fellowship of unity and peace with forgiving love by their concern and compassion for the world**. (Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 10:23-27).

As one who has been sent forth to live in the world, the Christian needs to know the world in which he lives. He is **to be in the world, but not of the world**. Being in the world, the Christian soon recognizes that there are often no clear cut answers to the issues he must face. He is dwarfed by the enormity of social evils and confused by the complexity of the issues of life. But as a Christian he knows he can neither abdicate his responsibility to face the social evils, nor can he comfort himself with easy answers to difficult social, economic, and political problems. (Phil. 2:12-13).

As he seeks to live in this world, the Christian realizes the necessity of thinking and acting together with other Christians as well as persons and groups other than his own. The Christian does not face the world alone. But he grows in strength through the Christian community into which he has been called. (Phil. 1:27). Within this community he is bound together in the unity of the Spirit with others who belong to Jesus Christ. (Eph. 4:15-16). The Church is composed of men and women from all walks of life and with a variety of experience. It is within this community that fellow Christians share their knowledge and their experience in the world. Within this community also God calls his people to listen to what the world is saying to the church. In this act of the church there is a need for this continual sharing and reflection upon the issues confronting Christians in the world. As the church does this in faithfulness to the mind of Christ, it can provide its people with a Christian understanding of the issues, a guide for living their faith, and strength for action in the present world.

It is in answer to this call to live and to serve God in the world that this statement of social concern is made. It is provided as a guide for Christian thinking and action in meeting the present problems of Philippine society.

(portion of the statement approved during the General Assembly, May 19-24, 1960)

## **PEACEMAKING: OUR MINISTRY**

*Council of Bishops*

*21 August 1986*

*Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.  
And the effect of righteousness will be peace ...*

**Isaiah 32:16-17**

### **ALL-ENCOMPASSING MEANING**

The Prince of Peace compels us to be peacemakers. We thus affirm and renew our commitment to peace through continued prayer and action. This commitment flows from our conviction that genuine peace can be attained only when founded on justice.

The Scriptures expand the meaning of peace to cover wholeness, wellbeing, growth, harmony, security, equality — not just the absence of violence and war. Real peace happens when the roots of conflicts and violence are removed, when a just social structure is built and when human rights and dignity are held sacred.

When justice and righteousness prevail, peace (**shalom**) reigns supreme. As Isaiah put it: *My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places* (32:18).

### **THREATS TO PEACE**

The ascendancy of the Aquino government brought hopes for peace and prosperity to this violence-torn land. But, while we have begun enjoying the democratic space so long denied us, the forces of evil around us continue to threaten peace.

Riding on the wave of our people's popular and legitimate quest for genuine peace, some elements in our society — who claim to be bearers of peace — are in fact agents of conflicts and violence. They have not stopped destabilizing the present government in the guise of *national reconciliation*. In the face of this ill-disguised attempt to subvert peace, we should remain vigilant.

### **MILITARIZATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDES**

While the Aquino government and the National Democratic Front (NDF) expressed a desire for a ceasefire, some elements are opting for a military solution to insurgency. Intensified military operations designed to eliminate insurgents have wrought havoc on the lives of our brothers and sisters in the countryside, eliciting defensive responses from the insurgents. This unfortunate situation tends to derail the ceasefire negotiations, and can frustrate efforts to attain genuine peace.

### **REAL THREAT TO PEACE: STRUCTURES OF INJUSTICE**

The real threat to peace is not the intransigence of hard-core rebels but unjust socio-economic political structures that breed insurgents. President Aquino herself, in her UP Commencement address, recognized that *the roots of insurgency are in the economic condition of the people and the social structures that oppress them*. What is considered *insurgency* is in many ways, a defensive action of people to protect their lives and rights.

### **GENUINE AND LASTING PEACE COMES WHEN PEOPLE'S NEEDS ARE SERVED**

*Genuine peace comes when justice is served.  
For as long as peasants remain landless,  
For as long as laborers do not receive just wages,  
For as long as we are politically and economically dominated by foreign nations,  
For as long as we channel more money to the military than to basic social services,  
For as long as the causes of social unrest remain untouched,  
There will be no peace.*

### **OUR MINISTRY OF PEACEMAKING**

The ministry of peacemaking is an imperative of the faith we profess. The Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines calls us *to participate in the establishment of a meaningful and just social order*. Hence, the peace we seek should result from our active participation in building structures that promote human development and uphold human dignity.

Our affirmation of faith demands the end of our indifference and silence. It calls for an unwavering commitment to the all-transcending task of building peace founded on justice.

As a people of God, we should identify threats to peace and human dignity in our national life. We should critically evaluate national and international policies and challenge them when they do not contribute to peacemaking.

As a Church, we should actively work for understanding, reconciliation and unity. We should join hands with peoples of the world in the common quest for peace based on justice. Above all, we should follow Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. **Shalom!**

After reading the statements, ask the following:

- What are your thoughts on the church's stance and declarations on issues that confronted society before?

- How would you describe a transformed society based on the declarations of our church?

#### Applying the Lessons Learned

- How did our church (local church in particular) live out the church's stance and declarations on justice, peace and care for creation? Cite concrete practices.

#### Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn "Tell My People"

Tell my people I love them, tell my people that I care  
When they feel far away from me, tell my people I am there.

Tell my people I came and died to give them liberty  
As they abide in me, they will be really free.

Tell my people where'er they go, to claim my risen pow'r,  
My peace, and joy and love is for them hour by hour.

Tell my people who grieve and mourn that I allowed the night  
Of darkness to descend but I am still the light.

Tell my people to share their wealth and fight the sin of greed  
Care for the refugee, the hungry they're to feed.

#### Closing Prayer

God who has the power to create, breathe on us again your breath of life so that we may find renewed strength and vigor to work for the transformation of society. This has been proclaimed by our church before, help us Lord to reclaim such declarations and empower us to live out our prophetic stance. With your mercy and power, this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen

#### *Lesson 22: Why do we need to transform church and society?*

Twelfth Sunday in Kingdomtide  
November 10, 2019

**General Concept:** Church and society needs to be transformed in order that God's Reign will become a reality in the here and now.

**Biblical References:** Psalm 98:7-9, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5

#### Age Level Concepts

- Church and society need to be transformed in order that God's Reign will become a reality.

- God’s Reign can become a reality in the here and now.

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the session, the learners should be able to

- Discuss reasons for the need for Church and society to be transformed
- Make the connection of a transformed church and society to the establishment of God’s Reign
- Commit to manifest in their daily lives the reality of God’s Reign

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

### **Biblical Background**

Psalm 98:7-9

The psalm expresses a call for the inanimate things of nature to celebrate all the Lord’s marvelous deeds when God comes to judge the earth with righteousness and equity. "God by God’s righteous judgment will bring the whole earth from a state of sorrow into a state of salvation and joy." This indicates that the judgement of God will transform the world and that all of earth’s inhabitants, both human and non-human, will join in praising the Lord. Here, the writer’s imagination grows more vivid. Here, they write that not only will all the people on the planet are to praise God, but also the seas, the fish and the humpback whales (Psalm 8:8; 104:25). All are invited to give a cheer for the marvelous deeds of God! And the hills are alive with the sound of music, and applause for the coming of the Lord.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-5

In 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, the Apostle had just preached successfully at Thessalonica where he had spoken about God with great boldness and success; he had shared the counsel of God to the people. Yet, he notes that while the Gospel came in and worked effectively in some of them, there was still people who forgot about his words with which the apostle tacitly charges them, and rebukes them gently for it. He also reminds them of former truths he had delivered to them. Historically, Paul was charged of teaching that Jesus was a king that was a rival to Caesar (Acts 17:7). This leads one to wonder how far Paul went when he was contrasting the kingdom of the world of which Rome was ruler with the kingdom of God of which Christ is king. Hence, the author reminds them that it is necessary to deliver the truth, both to warn the faithful against delusion, and to fortify the faithful against persecution.

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn            “Fill the World with Love”

In the morning of my life as I look at the sunrise,  
At the moment of my life when the world is new.  
And the blessing I shall ask that god will grant me  
To be brave and strong and true

(And to fill the world with love) 3x  
My whole life through.

In the noontime of my life I shall look at the sunshine.  
At the moment in my life when the skies are blue  
And the blessing I shall ask will remain unchanging  
To be brave and strong and true  
(And to fill the world with love) 3x  
My whole life through.

#### Opening Prayer

We pray that our faith may be nourished by your words. May we understand our purpose as your people by finding our significance in other people's lives. Help us discern your will for us as we gather today to study and share experiences. In Jesus' name, Amen.

### Learning Time

#### Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read Psalm 98:7-9

- What kind of a world was being described by the writer of the psalm?
- How was God being portrayed in the psalm?

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5

- What was the intention of Paul in writing this letter to the believers?
- What should believers be warned against?
- How should the day of the Lord be experienced?

#### Lessons Learned

Divide the class into three groups. Ask each group to describe or characterize the situation assigned to the group:

Group 1: A transformed church

Group 2: A transformed society

Group 3: God's Reign

Let each group share their work/discussion. The facilitator may write on the board how each group describe or characterize the situation given them.

Transformed church	Transformed Society	Reign of God
Ex.		

Serves those who are in need, compassionate, caring, lives out its faith in Christ.	Compassionate, caring, serves the poor, just, peaceful	Just, compassionate, no more hunger, there is peace, equality, respect and love.
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Ask the following:

- What are the similarities and differences can you find from the sharing of each group?
- Do you think these characteristics are manifested today in our church and society?
- Do you believe these can be achieved in our time? Why and how?
- Why do we need to transform the church and society?

Applying the Lessons Learned

A transformed church and society are manifestations of God’s reign over all people and the rest of creation. Though we work and hope for the realization of God’s reign, this does not mean that we cannot experience it in our time and lives.

Let each learner respond to the question: “How can we manifest God’s reign in our daily lives?”

### Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn      “The Kingdom of God is where God Reigns”

The Kingdom of God is where God reigns

A place of love, joy and peace.

The Kingdom of God is where God reigns

A place of love, joy and peace.

Closing Prayer

Loving God, in every good deed we do and in every ounce of goodness we receive, we are one step closer to you and your Kingdom. Teach us O Lord to be forgiving, caring, compassionate, just and obedient to your will. For only then can we become bearers of your love and peace to all who seek it. In Jesus’ name, we pray, Amen.