

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIAL *on the*
UCCP DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

OLDER ELEMENTARY

Lesson 1: How do we understand the “Declaration of Principles”?

**Trinity Sunday and
Communion Sunday**

First Sunday after Pentecost

June 7, 2020

General Concept: The Declaration of Principles are set of pronouncements, standards and principles laid down upon which we stand as a church and governing laws of conduct are derived. In addition to the Statement Faith, this is what we affirm as members of the UCCP.

Biblical References: *Psalm 119:1-8*

Key Verse: Psalm 119: 4

Age Level Concepts

- Our church has a set of statements from which laws and policies are made.
- We base our conduct from the Declaration of Principles.

Learning Objectives

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

- Articulate their understanding of the “Declaration of Principles”
- Point out the importance for the church to have a set of principles
- Affirm the “Declaration of Principles” of UCCP

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

Biblical Background

Psalms 119:1-8

This psalm is a lengthy meditation addressed to God on the excellencies of his law. The law here refers not to legal requirements such as in the law of Moses, but to the whole of God's instruction for humankind in general. Therefore, God's law is also called God’s word, commandments, sayings, judgments, statutes, ordinances, instructions, precepts, injunctions, testimonies, promise, way and path. At least one of these words occurs in almost every verse of the psalm.

Verses 1-16: In a confident opening statement the psalmist expresses the happiness enjoyed by those who live according to God's word (1-3). The psalmist then addresses God, praying that he himself will understand God's word and be obedient in following it (4-8). A good knowledge of God's word is a safeguard against sin (9-11). This knowledge is obtained by asking God's help in understanding his teaching, thinking it over and declaring it to others. Above all, the person must find pleasure in God's word and have a desire to know it and practise it (12-16).

With the same understanding, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines holds principles which serve as its guide, path or standard in its life and work. These principles are derived from its basic understanding of God's word, statutes, teachings and instructions based on the Scripture. As members, we affirm also our principles upon which we stand as a church and from which we derive our laws of conduct as a community of faith.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Greet the learners as they enter the classroom with a fist bump or a "high five". Make them feel they are welcome to come to class and that you are always looking forward to seeing them every Sunday.

Announcements/ Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn "Ang Umaga Ngayon" Children Praise God, 92

Ang umaga ngayon kay ganda, kay ganda

Ang umaga ngayon kay ganda, kay ganda

Tayo ay Masaya, magbigay ng Lingala

Ang umaga ngayon, kay ganda, kay ganda.

Opening Prayer

We praise you Lord for letting us wake up to this beautiful day with family and loved ones. Though we fear for our safety because of what is happening around us which we cannot fully understand, but we truly believe that with You we will overcome this. So we commit this day to learning Your words with gratitude and praise. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Getting Ready

GAME - "Simon Says". Gather around the learners and encourage them to actively participate in the game. Tell them that whenever they hear the phrase, "Simon says", they are to execute what Simon says. They are only to follow when Simon says it. Whenever they hear a command without the phrase "Simon says", they stay and do

nothing. Those who can't follow instructions will be eliminated from the game.

Example: "Simon says, "JUMP!" (everybody jumps)

"Dance!" (Everybody stays and does nothing)

"Simon says, "WAVE!" (everybody waves)

"KNEEL!" (everybody stays)

Process the game by asking the following:

1. Why do you commit mistakes?
2. Why was it hard to follow instructions?
3. What does it feel to be eliminated from the rest of the group?

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth. Ask two learners to read the text responsively. Divide the class into two groups. Tell each group to do the following:

A. Pick out the words that are similar in meaning. Let them write the words on a meta-card. (one card, one word)

B. After picking out the words similar in meaning, find out what to do with them, according to psalms.

C. Discuss the importance of doing God's teachings, precepts, statutes. Let each group report their work to the class.

Lessons Learned

From the reports of the groups, ask them to post the words they found similar from the text. Write on a meta card the word "Principles".

A. Let them compare the words and find its common meaning.

B. Discuss the purpose of these words to the life of a believer.

Precepts - means command or principle intended especially as a general rule of action

Statutes - means an act of a corporation or of its founder intended as a permanent rule

Decrees- means a religious ordinance enacted by council or titular head

Laws - means a binding custom or practice of a community: a rule of conduct or action prescribed or formally recognized as binding or

enforced by a controlling authority; the whole body of such customs, practices or rules

Command- means an order given

Principles- a comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine or assumption; a rule or code of conduct

Our UCCP has its own set of principles. Our Declaration of Principles are set of pronouncements, standards and principles laid down for all members to adhere. It is written as part of our Constitution and By-Laws. These principles are derived from its basic understanding of God's word, statutes, teachings and instructions based on the Scripture. As members, we affirm also our principles upon which we stand as a church and from which we derive our laws of conduct as a community of faith.

Applying the Lessons Learned

From their understanding of the lesson, tell the learners to fill our the letters. they may use their own dialect.

Example:

P- ronouncements

R- elated to

I- nstitutional

N- orms,

C- onduct and

I- mplementaion of

P- olicies that

L- eads the

E- ntire membership to unity.

Closing Worship

Offertory

Memory Verse: "You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed"
Psalm 199:4

Closing Song "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

I have decided to follow Jesus

I have decided to follow Jesus
I have decided to follow Jesus
No turning back, no turning back.

God's words are righteous
We'll walk in God's ways. (3x)
No turning back, no turning back.

Closing Prayer

We are guided by Your statutes and decrees Lord. Through Your Holy Spirit, may we as a church continue to live out our principles through our actions and words. Bless us as we strive to follow Your way. Amen.

Lesson 2: How did our Declaration of Principles come to be?

Freedom Sunday

Second Sunday after Pentecost

June 14, 2020

General Concept: The Declaration of Principles was formulated in 1993 during the Constitutional Convention aimed to articulate the church's self-understanding of its identity, task and mission as a community of faith and as an institution.

Biblical References: *Joshua 24: 1-28; Acts 15: 1-21;*

Key Verse: Joshua 24: 25

“So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.”

Age-Level Concepts

- The church leaders gathered to formulate the Declaration of Principles as part of the Constitution and By-Laws of UCCP.
- The Declaration of Principles was made to define its identity, task and mission as a church.
- As UCCP members, we abide by the principles set by our church.

Learning Objectives

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

- Tell how the Declaration of Principles of UCCP came to be
- Articulate the purpose of formulating the Declaration of Principles
- Express appreciation for the formulation of the Declaration of Principles

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

Biblical Background

Joshua 24: 1-15

Our biblical text is considered as Joshua's final speech which has similarities to the much longer speeches given by Moses in Deuteronomy. According to biblical scholars, both speeches follow the pattern of a treaty between a ruler and his people which is also known as "suzerainty treaty". The following elements of such treaty are found in Joshua's speech:

1. A *preamble* identifying the parties of the treaty, such as a king and a small cluster of tribes who wants protection.
2. A *capsule history* describing previous relations between the two parties
3. *Rules defining each party's obligation.* The king may swear to defend some tribes with his armies in return for allegiance, taxes, percentage of produce.
4. *Witnesses to the treaties* including in many cases, list of important people or list of gods
5. *Curses and blessings* specifying what will take place if the parties breaks the treaty.

Treaty is another word for "covenant"- the one we are using to describe the formal agreement between God and the Israelites. In this text, Joshua used the occasion to renew the covenant between God and the Israelites.

Like the Israelites in the past, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines gathered in 1993 through a Constitutional Convention with the presence of church leaders, representatives of conferences, pastors and other stakeholders to further strengthen its unity and harmony by constructing its governing laws and structure that will become the basis of church's life and work. The *Declaration of Principles* was formulated in 1993 during the Constitutional Convention aimed to articulate the church's self-understanding of its identity, task and mission as a community of faith and as an institution.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time. Welcome the learners with a fist bump, high five or a bow.

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song "I'm Here". Children Praise God, 228

I'm here because you're here because

I'm here because you're here.

I'm here because you're here because

I'm here because you're here.

We're here because we're one in faith

To work in harmony

We're here because we're one in facing life's reality.

Opening Prayer

Your faithfulness O Lord is seen everyday. Through the air we breathe, the sun that shines, the wind the blows, flowers that bloom, and water that flows. We acknowledge your greatness fo Your love felt through family and friends, through people that care. May our coming together today, pleases you in all ways. Amen

Getting Ready

VERSE PUZZLE. Prepare two sets of puzzle. Write or print out the key verse and glue it to a cardboard or Cartolina. Cut out the words. During the class, divide the learners into two groups. Give each group a set of the verse puzzle. Tell them that the first to solve the puzzle wins.

After the game, tell the learners that the verse is part of the text that they are going to study.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask someone from among the learners to act as Joshua. Dress him up like that of the olden times. Have him read the text found in Joshua 24:1-28.

After reading, ask the learners the following:

1. When did the speech of Joshua happen?
2. Where did the final speech of Joshua happen?
3. Why did Joshua gather the people?
4. Why do you think Joshua speak about the people and events in the past?

Lessons Learned

Song Learning *“Faith of Our Fathers”*

Faith of our fathers living still
In spite of dungeon, fire and sword
Oh how our hearts beat high with joy
Whene’er we heart that glorious word,
Faith of our fathers, holy faith
We will be true to thee till death.

Our fathers, chained in prisons dark
We’re still in heart and conscience free
How sweet would be their children’s fate
If they like them could die for thee,
Faith of our fathers, holy faith
we will be true to thee till death.

Story Telling. Tell the learners the story about how the Declaration of Principles came to be. It may be short but it is important for the learners to remember significant events of the church's life.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTIONS FEB. 25-27, 1993 EC 93-38

That the delegation to the Constitutional Convention will be as follows:

1. Present members of the Executive Committee
2. All Past General Officers, past Chairpersons of the General Assembly, past General Secretaries, National Treasurers and past Bishops who have served at least one term.
3. Delegates elected by the Annual Conferences: two (2) Ordained ministers and two (2) lay persons for every 5,000 members or major fraction thereof, plus two (2) youth who are non-pastors provided that they are not more than 30 years old at the time of the first day of the Constitutional Convention.
4. Six delegates from CREATE and two delegates from the hospitals.
5. In addition to the two (2) lay persons, local churches with at least 500 members and above shall be entitled to one (1) delegate, (a) provided that said local churches have no delegates elected by the annual conference, and (b) provided further that at least one half (1/2) of the delegation from the conferences shall be women in so far as practicable."

The Constitutional Convention which was supposed to happen in October 1992 was postponed to 2nd week of September which is to specifically start on September 14, 1993. It was held in UCCP- Ellinwood, Malate, Manila.

The UCCP Declaration of Principles was written as part of the UCCP Constitution and By-Laws which is in Article 2. In 1993, the Constitutional Convention was convened and provided the UCCP the opportunity to redefine and reposition itself. The Convention offered the golden opportunity for UCCP to articulate the church's self-understanding of its identity, tasks, and mission as a community of faith and as an institution. What was the resulting UCCP self-understanding of its identity and mission? As Bishop Reuel Marigza remarked, "the Heart and Soul of our Constitution are the Covenant Prayer and Declaration of Principles. The Covenant Prayer, which serves as Preamble, is the "heart" as it expresses the desire of our faith community, that is to *remain in covenant relationship with God and with one another*. This covenant relationship exists to en flesh the vision of our "founding parents of a united and a uniting church, reformed and transforming church." The bias for the unity of the Church is clearly stated, to be expressed both in the conciliar-ecumenical form and in the form of organic union. While the latter form has been relegated to the side as an aim of the ecumenical movement, the UCCP, even as it affirms its commitment to the ecumenical movement, sees the organic union as still a valid missional and ecclesiological concern and thrust. The Declaration of

Principles, is the “soul” of the 1993 Constitution, detailing the essence of UCCP’s being. Like the Covenant Prayer, it, too, covers a lot of missional grounds it is the basis of our decisions, stand on issues, and conduct.”

The UCCP Constitution and By-Laws paid way of unifying the various Local Churches who experienced and still experiencing disunity amount its members and church workers. It became the basis of our faith understanding of who we are as a Church and who we are as people of God who are called to be partners in doing God’s mission to the whole creation. (Bishop Reuel Norman Marigza)

Write the key word/s on a meta card. Post one meta card at a time as you go along explaining each key word.

1993

Constitutional Convention

Declaration of Principles

1993- In 1993, the United Church of Christ called for a Constitutional Convention attended by church leaders, representatives from the different conferences and other individuals of the church present to witness the event.

Constitutional Convention - It is a gathering of any institution, in our case, the church to discuss matters that has to do with the constitution and by-laws of the church. In this gathering amendments to the document are proposed and discussed, changes are made in relation to policies and rules of the church.

Declaration of Principles - It is particularly found in Article 2 of the UCCP Constitution and By-Laws. It was formulated to articulate the church’s self-understanding of its identity, task and mission as a community of faith and as an institution. It has become the basis of how the church responds to the call and challenges of society; the point of reference on how we relate with other communities and the basis of our stand to societal issues.

Applying the Lessons Learned

Ask: “As members of UCCP, how can we show our appreciation for the effort of our church to come up with the Declaration of Principles?”

Divide the class into two groups. Give each group time to think of creative ways to express their appreciation. Let each group present their group.

Closing Worship

Offertory

Key Verse. Tell the learners to recite the key verse in Joshua 24: 25.

Closing Song “Faith of Our Fathers” (last stanza)

Faith of our fathers we will love
Both friend and foe in all our strife
And preach thee too as love knows how
By kindly words and virtuous life
Faith of our fathers, holy faith
We will be true to thee till death.

Closing Prayer

We are thankful O Lord for our fathers in faith that worked hard to set principles that would guide members of the church as they live out their faith and mission. Thank you for being the Light of our church, our constant companion in our journey as a community. May you be praised and glorified in all our actions and words. Amen.

Lesson 3: What is the significance of having principles to the life and work of the church?

Father’s Day

Third Sunday after Pentecost

June 21, 2020

General Concept: The Declaration of Principles is the “soul” of the UCCP Constitution and By-laws, in that it expresses the essence of UCCP’s being and identity.

Biblical References: *Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 1 Corinthians 15:58*

Age Level Concepts

- Our church has principles that guide the life and work of the church.
- We give importance to our Declaration of Principles.
- We embrace and keep the principles of our church.

Learning Objectives

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

- Tell the importance of having principles to live by
- Show the importance of principles as applied to life situations
- Affirm the significance of principles to the life and work of the church

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

Biblical Background

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

This biblical text has been used for several occasions and study. It is so because this text holds great significance not only to the life of Israel but also to our understanding of God's intention to establish a relationship to the whole of humankind and creation. The "Shema" is considered the "heart and soul" of the covenant relationship between God and Israel. It even specified how to conduct faithfulness to the covenant. The main emphasis of "Shema" was to remind Israel of how they came to be, as God's people. It intends to tell the next generation of Israelites of God's initiative to take the people out of slavery to a land promised to abound with "milk and honey". In a way, the "Shema" tells of the hearers of Israel's being and identity - a people liberated from slavery and oppression with whom God established a covenant relationship.

1 Corinthians 15:58

The city of Corinth was known to have a large population second to Rome. Like any large city, Corinth is not exempted to a shameless and immoral lifestyle, one can find a place where prostitutes, strippers, gamblers and drug dealers hang out. Tourists roam around to gawk at these sights. Corinth was known to worship money and the evil it can buy. Money was flowing everywhere because Corinth was open to trade. As an important trade route, it hosted different kinds of people like slaves, Orientals, Jews, Greeks, sailors, gamblers, charioteers and others. The learned showcase their "Corinthian" architecture and prided themselves of the city's cosmopolitan life and outlook. On the other hand, the people in Corinth embraced Venus, the goddess of love and built a temple for her with a thousand prostitutes in it.

Corinth was very unlikely the place to work and hardly the place to easily make converts to Christian faith. With the "happy and good-time" atmosphere, new religions could easily sprung up which could make the mission work even more difficult. But "in weakness and fear and trembling heart" Paul took the challenge to sow the gospel in the city. Paul has one strategic principle in mind: that if Christian faith can take root in the city of Corinth, it can spread easily. Surprisingly, the church in Corinth became one of the largest church. Several years later, Paul heard bad news about the church and the pervading issues that try to divide the community. It was for this reason that Paul wrote with anger and disappointment to the church in Corinth.

Now, after tackling the issues related to personal behavior, Paul addressed a doctrinal question about death. Paul emphasized that if there is no life in the future life, then the message of Christ is a lie; that Christ's death is just a waste and being a Christian is such as pitiful state. He further emphasized that if death is conquered, it not the end but only a beginning. Then Paul challenged the Christians to "stand firm" in faith.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song. “Welcome” Children Praise God, 67

Welcome, welcome all of you
Glad you are with us
Shake hands, no need to be blue
Welcome to you

(Replace shake hands with fist bump, let’s bow or high five)

Opening Prayer

We gather together not because we were forced to but because we wanted to.
We ask that You bless us today as we study Your word. and may our lesson
today help us understand the life and mission of our church. In Jesus’ name.
Amen

Getting Ready

Song Learning

“ The Church’s One Foundation”

The Church’s one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the Word:
From heav’n He came and sought her
To be His holy Bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.

Mid toil and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace for evermore;
Till, with the vision glorious,
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Divide the class into two groups. Print out the biblical texts. Assign each group a text. Instruct the groups to underline the phrase or sentence which they think is the “core” message or that which sums up the whole message of

the text. Tell them to write their chosen phrase or sentence to a Cartolina. Have a representative explain the phrase or sentence they have chosen.

Example:

Deuteronomy 6: 4-9 (NRSV)

“ Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might”

1 Corinthians 15: 58

“ Be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord...”

Note: Synthesize their sharing using the biblical background as guide.

Lessons Learned

With the same groups, tell them that they are going to apply their chosen phrase or sentence to life situations. They are to show it through a role play.

Note: The teacher may write situations on a piece of paper, put it in a box or glass. Ask one representative from each group to pick a paper to determine their assigned situationer. Give them time to brainstorm for their presentation.

Situations:

1. Your friend is being bullied in school because he is gay.
2. Your parents had a quarrel with your relatives because of a piece of property. You see them in the church every Sunday.
3. Your family is packing food to be distributed to those in need because of the pandemic. One of the members of that beneficiary community is the family of the one who mistreated you.
4. Someone posted on social media about you that causes shame and hurt to your family. That person is your neighbor whose father is a lawyer.

After presentation, ask the learners about:

1. Difficulties in applying their chosen phrase or sentence
2. How does their chosen phrase/sentence help them deal with the situation given them

Say: “The Declaration of Principles of UCCP is like the phrase or sentence you have chosen and used to guide you to deal with life situations. The “principles” set by the church tells us who we are, what we stand for and tells us what to do in a given situation and challenge. It captures the church’s identity and being. it makes UCCP distinct from other faith communities.

Applying the Lessons Learned

Ask: “Why is it important for the church to have its own principles?” To check the understanding of the learners encourage them to complete the sentence, “Our church needs to have its own principles so that _____.”

Synthesize the statements of the learners by saying, “In addition to the Statement of Faith, we also affirm our Declaration of Principles as guide and standard in the life, mission and conduct of the church in these challenging times.

Closing Time

Offertory

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 15: 58

“ Be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain”

Closing Song “ The Church’s One Foundation”

Hymnal of Faith Journey,242

The Church’s one foundation

Is Jesus Christ her Lord;

She is His new creation

By water and the Word:

From heav’n He came and sought her

To be His holy Bride;

With His own blood He bought her,

And for her life He died.

Closing Prayer

We are thankful to be able to grasp the importance of having principles in life. Just as the Declaration of Principles of UCCP is important to our church, may your message of the Kingdom continues to move us forward. With the help of the Holy Spirit, these we ask in Your name. Amen

Lesson 4: What do we mean by being an “integral part of the Church” of Jesus Christ?

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

June 28,2020

General Concept: Being an integral part of the Church of Jesus Christ means we are connected with other community of Christian believers and part of a bigger and wider body.

Biblical References: 1 Corinthians 1:2; 12:4-14; 21-27

Age Level Concepts

- We are part of the whole Christian community.
- We are connected with other Christian communities.

Learning Objectives

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

- Articulate their understanding of “being an integral part of the Church” of Jesus Christ.
- Express creatively what it means to be an integral part of the Church of Jesus Christ.
- Affirm our being an integral part of the Church of Jesus Christ.

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

Biblical Background

1 Corinthians 1:2; 12: 4-14,21-27

As we have mentioned in the previous lesson, Paul was urged to write the church at Corinth because of the issues and troubles that threatens to divide the church. Even if the Corinthian Christians were experiencing spiritual turmoil but still Paul considered them as God’s holy people. In his greeting, he implied that they were still part of that bigger community “who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” despite the crisis they were in.

Among the issues being raised and addressed by Paul in his letter was about the division in the church. In chapter 12, Paul gave a sort of a lecture about the human body. The purpose of which is to teach the Christians in Corinth two important things that they missed to comprehend. First, is that any part of the body - such as the eyes, feet, hands or tongue - gives valuable contribution to the whole body. One part that does not function or in pain in any way, the whole body suffers. Secondly, Paul reiterated that no part of the body can survive alone. Being apart from the other parts makes one useless. Every part of the body is connected and must cooperated in order to make a single, unified body. Paul emphasized both the diversity and unity of the body.

Just as one part of the body is integral to the whole, the troubles of one church like that of Corinth affects the whole Christian church as well. In one instance, Paul even mentioned the suffering of the church in Jerusalem and asked for help. This is to teach us that our faith community should not look at itself separate from other communities. We are an integral part of the Church of Jesus Christ and therefore we should see ourselves connected to the other parts of the body in the expression of our faith and mission.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song “Good Morning To You” Children Praise God, 68

Good morning to you boys and girls

Boys and girls, boys and girls

Good morning to you boys and girls

How are you? I’m fine, thank you.

Tagalog:

Magandang umaga sa ‘nyo kamag-aural

Magandang umaga sa ‘nyo

Kumusta, mabuti po!

Cebuano:

Maayong buntag kaninyo mga ka-eskwela

Maayong buntag kaninyo

Kumusta? Maayo man.

Ilocano:

Naimbag a bigat tay ‘amin a ka-eskwela-ac

Naimbag a bigat yo Amin

Kumusta? Naimbag u nay!

Opening Prayer

We praise you today for giving us the chance to see the wonder of your works. You have given us reasons to get up, to work, to love, to connect with others. May our activity today demonstrates our desire to be with You and others. In Jesus name, Amen.

Getting Ready

Song Learning ”A United and Uniting Church” Children Praise God,4

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

Covenant in as one together, with God’s Spirit sole Enabler.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask a learner to read the biblical text. Ask the learners the following:

1. How would you explain the importance of every part to the whole body?

2. How should the differences in every part of the body be treated?
3. How can differences of each part become useful for unity?

Note: Answers to the questions may be guided by the biblical background. It is important to emphasize the word “integral part” of the church of Jesus Christ. This principle stresses that our church is not separated from the other faith communities but part of the larger community of believers.

Lessons Learned

GAME. Draw a human body and cut out its parts. Distribute the cut outs to the learners. Place a Cartolina or a Manila paper at the center of the board. Paste the head on it. Blindfolded, ask each learner with a cut-out to place the part of the body in its proper place. After all have taken their turn, have them looked at their work.

1. How would you describe the human figure?
2. What reflections about the body can you draw out from the game?
3. How would you apply your learnings to the life of the church?

Applying the Lessons Learned

Visualize UCCP being an integral part of the Church of Jesus Christ through a collage or poster. Divide the class into two groups. Each group will choose a reporter to explain their creative output.

Closing Worship

Offertory

Key verse: 1 Corinthians 12: 13 “For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

Closing Song ”A United and Uniting Church”

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
Covenant in as one together, with God’s Spirit sole Enabler.

Closing Prayer

Thank you Lord for teaching us that we should not look at ourselves separate from the other faith communities; that we are part of a bigger body. May this principle guides us as we connect ourselves with those whom we believe are not members of our community. Give us always the spirit that consider others despite the differences. This we ask in Jesus’ name. Amen

Lesson 5: What do we mean by “One Church of Jesus Christ”?

Communion Sunday

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

July 5, 2020

General Concept: The One Church of Jesus Christ is the community of believers that proclaims Christ’s Lordship.

Biblical References: Ephesians 4:5-6, 15-16; Galatians 3:28

Age Level Concepts

- Our church proclaims that Jesus is Lord.
- The Church is the community of Christian believers.

Learning Objectives

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

- Articulate their understanding of the church as the community of Christian believers
- Declare that our church proclaims Jesus is Lord
- Picture out their understanding of the “One Church of Jesus Christ”

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

Biblical Background

Ephesians 4: 1-16

Just as Paul wrote the Corinthians because of the rumors of disunity among them, it is also believed that he wrote to the Christians in Ephesus to deal with the same problem. As Christianity spread rapidly, churches were confronted with threats to its unity.

In our biblical text, Paul spent a lengthy discussion about the differences within the community, the diversity of gifts and functions and most importantly, he emphasized also about things they have in common under one body.

“People in the church come from various racial, cultural and social backgrounds, but they must not allow these differences to spoil the unity that God has created in the church (3). After all, they hold all the important things in common. They are indwelt by the same Spirit, they own the same Jesus as Lord and they are children of the same heavenly Father. As fellow members of the same body, the church, they have experienced the same baptism, share the same faith and look forward to the same salvation (4-6).

Paul emphasized that the followers are because of the following:

- **There is one Lord** – The use of “Lord” clearly refers to Jesus. Declaring that Jesus is Lord was viewed both as a statement of faith and as a political statement. To declare that Jesus is Lord is also a way of declaring that the Roman Emperor is not God.
- **There is one faith** – Faith signifies the importance of the foundational tenets of the Church. These tenets or principles are pertinent in ensuring the unity of the church.
- **There is one baptism** – This is a highly debated upon statement. When we say “One Baptism” do we mean the form or the way it is being done? Baptism is closely connected with salvation. A person who is saved experiences an inward transformation but true transformation is shown outwardly through ones actions. Thus somebody said that “Baptism is the outward testimony of the inward transformation. It is not the ritual or the method that counts. It is the how the saved individual gives a testimony to the one who caused the transformation. And that one is none other than Jesus Christ. A baptized believer is a transformed being. He/she exudes love (Verse 15-16). This love to God radiates in how he/she relates with other people.

Such Christians will not be like immature children who can be persuaded to believe almost anything (14). Mature Christians will be confident in their faith, though they will always act towards others in love. They will be under the control of Christ, as the parts of the body are under the control of the head. This will help them to maintain and develop strength in the church” (15-16). (Bridgeway Bible Commentary)

The “One Church of Jesus Christ” refers to the whole community of believers who proclaim the lordship of Jesus Christ. It does not necessarily mean that they gather together as one institution or congregation. Though they may proclaim the same Lord, same baptism, same Spirit but they vary in its expression of faith and mission. Though it was Jesus’ prayer that “all may be one” but reality tells us that such kind of unity is a work in progress. One thing remains true to all believers - we proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ in our lives as parts of His body.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song “Jesus Is In Me”

Jesus is in me and Jesus is in you

Jesus is in us, for He loves us

Jesus is in me, and Jesus is in you

Jesus is in us for He loves us.

Chorus:

Oh, therefore, we should be one

Love one another as He loves us

Oh, therefore, we should be one

Love one another as He loves us.

Opening Prayer

Our loving and merciful God, bless this day as we gather to share experiences and thoughts of who Jesus Christ is in our life. May you find our study pleasing in Your sight. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Getting Ready

Bible Verse Hunting. Divide the class into two groups. Tell the learners to decode the missing sentence/statement by finding the clues. The hidden word is found in the texts that serves as clues. Learners should have the same version of the Bible.

The teacher will give each group a piece of paper written on it are the biblical texts where they can find the first word and clue.

First word: John 1:17 (NRSV) 13th and 14th word (JESUS CHRIST)

Clue: Luke 13: 6 (NRSV) 11th word (tree - where the next word and clue is found)

Second word: Acts 4: 10 (NRSV) 19th word (IS)

Clue: Matthew 7:9 (NRSV) 16th word (stone - where the next word and clue is found)

Third word: Mark 11:3 (NRSV) 15th word (LORD)

Clue: Romans 11:9 (NRSV) 6th word (table - where the next word and clue is found)

Fourth word: Ephesians 2:3 (NRSV) 2nd word (OF)

Clue: 2 Corinthians 11: 33 (NRSV) 11th word (window)

Fifth word: Colossians 1:20 (NRSV) 11th word (ALL)

After all the words are found, it should be recited in front of the teacher. the first group to the statement wins.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth. Print out the biblical text found in Ephesians 4: 1-6. Give each learner a copy. Using coloring pens or just pencil, tell them to circle the phrases or words that they think would

describe the church as a community of Christian believers or as “one Church of Jesus Christ”. Let them explain the words they have chosen.

Example:

One Lord – The use of “Lord” clearly refers to Jesus. Declaring that Jesus is Lord was viewed both as a statement of faith and as a political statement. To declare that Jesus is Lord is also a way of declaring that the Roman Emperor is not God.

One faith – Faith signifies the importance of the foundational tenets of the Church. These tenets or principles are pertinent in ensuring the unity of the church.

One baptism – This is a highly debated upon statement. When we say “One Baptism” do we mean the form or the way it is being done? Baptism is closely connected with salvation. A person who is saved experiences an inward transformation but true transformation is shown outwardly through ones actions. Thus somebody said that “Baptism is the outward testimony of the inward transformation. It is not the ritual or the method that counts. It is the how the saved individual gives a testimony to the one who caused the transformation. And that one is none other than Jesus Christ. A baptized believer is a transformed being. He/she exudes love (Verse 15-16). This love to God radiates in how he/she relates with other people.

One body - this refers to the Church which bears witness to the life and work of Jesus Christ to the world. The Church is the body of Christ for which Jesus Christ is the head.

One Spirit - this refers to the Spirit of God sent to guide and empower believers in their faith and practice. Christian believers received gifts from the same Spirit for the work and growth of the Church.

One hope - this refers to the Christian hope of a life with God- life in the kingdom as demonstrated by Jesus’ resurrection. Jesus is the source of this hope.

One God - Christian believers are called to witness to the world of God’s participation in the lives of people- the God that is all powerful, faithful and just; a God that establishes relationship with the people.

Lessons Learned

From the words/ phrases they have chosen and discussed ask the learners, “How do you understand the concept of “One Church of Jesus Christ” and UCCP being a part of it?”

Let the learners express their thoughts. They may also raise questions if they wanted to clarify things.

Say: “The One Church of Jesus Christ does not only mean UCCP. It also implies all who believed and proclaimed Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. One Church does not mean one denomination only but the whole community of believers.”

Applying the Lessons Learned

Let the learners picture out the concept of the ”One Church of Jesus Christ is the community of believers that proclaims Christ’s Lordship.”

Divide the class into two groups. Give them art materials for this activity. They can make a picture collage, draw, or make a collage from the different phrases they have studied and learned.

Let each group share their work. Show appreciation for what they have accomplished.

Closing Worship

Offertory

Key Verse : Ephesians 4: 4. “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling.”

Closing Song “We are One in the Spirit”

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
And we pray that our unity may one day be restored,
And they’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.

Closing Prayer

We are glad to know that we do not stand alone in proclaiming that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. May our actions and words show Your love, humility, compassion and commitment to serve those who are in need. Teach us always to reach out to others who believe in You so that together we may become truly Your One Body in the world. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

