

Lesson 6: *What do we mean by “Holy Church of Jesus Christ”?*

Rural Life Emphasis Sunday

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

July 12, 2020

General Concept: *The Holy Church of Jesus Christ means being set apart for special purpose by and for God.*

Biblical References: Leviticus 20:26, 1 Peter 2:9

Age Level Concepts

- The Holy Church of Jesus Christ means being set apart for special purpose by and for God
- The holiness of the church is derived from Christ’s holiness.
- We live out Christ’s holiness.

Learning Objectives

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

- Examine how the church manifests its holiness in the present context.
- Ruminates on the correlation between Christ’s holiness and the Church’s holiness.
- Ascertain various ways of exhibiting the Holiness of the Church in the various church and community ministries.

Materials: Bible, LCD projector (if available if none a blackboard will do), Manila paper (where Leviticus 20:26 and 1st Peter 2:9 is written), Scotch tape

Biblical Background

Leviticus 20:26, 1st Peter 2:9

The overarching theme of Leviticus is sanctification. The book of Leviticus conveys the message that God is holy and is a forgiving and redeeming God. Israel, being a redeemed, forgiven and chosen nation, is compelled to live a holy life and to grow in faith. The book of Leviticus presents shows the wide difference between God and people as represented by Israel. God is holy and pure while the Israelites are sinful and impure. Only God is holy but through living in accordance with God’s will and purpose one can attain holiness. Yet amid Israel’s impurity God called them for the purpose of becoming a priestly kingdom and a holy nation (Exodus 19:5-6). This means that they are to do God’s mission into the world. This is the very essence of what it means to be a priestly kingdom and a holy nation.

1 Peter 2:9

1 Peter 2:9 reverberates the same language describing Israel as priestly kingdom and a holy nation. But the New Israel now includes all who follow Christ including the Gentiles who compose

mostly of Peter's audience. The Christian church is holy in the sense that it is commissioned to do Christ's mission. To be holy is to emulate Christ who became the light in the midst of darkness. To be holy is to proclaim God's message of love, peace and justice in the midst of an unjust social order.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Opening Hymn "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 25

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light, in accessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, your great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting and silent as light,
Not wanting, not wasting but ruling in might,
Your justice like mountains high soaring above,
Your clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

Opening Prayer (May be led by any participant)

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Post or write the two biblical texts on the board. Request the participants to read in silence. Each participant will choose a word or phrase which they believe is important. Possible words would be:

- Holy/holy nation
- Separated
- Chosen race
- Royal priesthood
- Darkness
- Light

Summarize their answers.

Discussion . Further talk about the text focusing on the following:

- a. What is the biblical meaning of holy/holiness?
- b. Based on Leviticus 20 what are some of the laws to be followed in attaining a holy or sanctified life?
- c. Who is deemed as the holy nation in Leviticus and 1st Peter?
- d. What is the difference of their understanding of who the holy nation is?
- e. How is the holiness of the church manifested, based in 2nd Peter 2:9?

Lessons Learned

Post or draw a picture of a person on the board. Guide questions for discussion:

- Do you think this person is holy? Why?
- What would make a person or even a thing holy?
- What would make the church holy?

Applying the Lessons Learned

Divide the participants into 2 groups. One group will focus on the family and the other will focus on the community.

Guide question for buzz group:

- Identify a concrete activity or a ministry that the church must do to manifest the holiness of Christ at the family or the community level.
- Suggest ways on how the church can proclaim God's mighty acts and bring marvelous light into the darkness as Christ did.

Closing Time

Participants gather up at the altar and place their output as well as their offerings

Closing Hymn "There's a Wideness In God's Mercy" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 51
There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea,
There's a kindness in God's justice, which is more than liberty,
There's no place where earthly sorrows are more felt than in God's heaven,
There's no place where earthly failings have such kindly judgement given.

Offering

Closing Prayer

As we close this gathering, Lord, we want to give honor to You. Thank You, God, for the time we had today to learn new lessons pertinent to our lives as members of your church. May You bless each person who took the time to gather here today and let Your hand of protection be on them throughout the rest of the week. May the lessons we have learned come to fruition for your glory and honor. Amen

Lesson 7: What do we mean by "catholic Church of Jesus Christ"?

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

July 19, 2020

General Concept: The Catholic Church of Jesus Christ means it extends throughout the world and during all times and that the Church is universal.

Biblical References: John 10:16, Philemon 1:17

Age Level Concepts

- The Catholic Church of Jesus Christ means it extends throughout the world and during all times
- We recognize and respect the diversity of faith expressions
- We establish partnership with other faith communities in doing mission

Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson the learners are expected to:

- Explain in their own words the essence of the catholicity of the Church of Jesus Christ
- Assess the individuality and diversity of each faith expression
- Explore ways of linking with other faith communities in mission work

Materials: Bible

Biblical Background

John 10:16, Philemon 1:1

John 10 provides a description of what a true shepherd is and the shepherd's intimate relation with the sheep. One very significant aspect of shepherding is the fact that the sheep knows the voice of the shepherd. Listening is very important. The sheep listens to the voice of the shepherd and follows. However verse 16 presents a different aspect. In here, it is not the sheep who listens. The one doing the listening is the shepherd. Listening is not just about hearing. Listening includes knowing, understanding and caring. John 10:16 presents an image of a shepherd who is aware that there are other sheep who need God's love and care just like those who belong to the fold. God's love and care is for all. This message must be proclaimed by the church at all times to all peoples and in all situations. Thus the church ought to be a welcoming and inclusive church. This is the very message of Paul to Philemon. Philemon, a slave owner, must have been a leader of a house church in the City of Colossae. Onesimus, a typical name of a slave, run away from him. Probably Onesimus must have stolen something (1:18). Yet Onesimus has been transformed through Paul's ministry of the Gospel. In this epistle Paul proclaims the transforming power of the Gospel. Paul urges Philemon to welcome Onesimus back and foster a new for relationship. The master-slave relation to brotherhood, from an oppressive relation to one that is just and caring. A church indeed must have a welcoming character and treat each one as a sister or brother.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Request each one to greet each other with a smile

Opening Hymn: "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 172
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES

Sunday School Material 2020-2021

Adults

All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Christ servant of all.
Attend the Savior's sovereign claim, and crown Christ servant of all.

Adorn O martyred saints of old, the coronation hall;
Extol the wounded One foretold, and crown Christ bearer of all.
Extol the wounded One foretold, and crown Christ bearer of all.

Opening Prayer (Request a participant to lead the prayer)

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read the biblical references.

Guide Questions for discussion:

- What is a shepherd's task?
- What are the qualities of a good shepherd?
- How does a true shepherd deal with sheep who does not belong to the fold?
- What is Paul's challenge to Philemon being a leader of a Church in Colossae?
- If you were Philemon how would you have reacted to Paul's appeal?

Lessons Learned

Show a jar of honey (if available) and let each one have a taste.

Say: "It requires approximately 500 bees to make a pound of honey. Making honey requires a lot of work and therefore a lot of workers. Some bees travel thousands of miles to take part in the making of a pound of honey.

- What do this tell us about doing God's mission?
- What do this tell us about relationships?
- In what way can the church be a shepherd committed to reaching to those outside of the fold?
- How does your concept of being a "catholic church" changed by the idea of shepherding?

Applying the Lessons Learned

- Identify a non-UCCP church or different faith expression in your community.
- Identify one activity that would ensure reaching out to them.
- Identify an activity that both parties can do together for the benefit of the community while respecting each one's uniqueness or diversity.

Closing Time

Closing Hymn "We are one in the Bond of Love"

We are one in the bond of love (2x)
We have joined our spirit with the spirit of God
We are one in the bond of love.

Let us sing now everyone; let us feel his love begun
Let us join our hands that the world may know
We are one in the bond of love.

Offering

Closing Prayer

O God, we pray for a spirit of cooperation and eagerness to contribute to the needs of the whole body, so that Your Church is built not just with sweat, bricks, and mortar but with love, care, and teamwork. Therefore we go forth in unity and purpose as we do our part in building each other up in the various natural gifting and learned skills You have given us as we strive for unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God. Amen.

Adopted from: <https://adailyprayer.wordpress.com/2009/03/19/a-prayer-for-cooperation/>

Lesson 8: What do we mean by “apostolic Church of Jesus Christ”?

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

July 26, 2020

General Concept: The apostolic Church of Jesus Christ means that we trace back our beginnings with the call, orientation of the apostles, and their teachings as handed to them by Jesus Christ.

Biblical References: Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 2:42-47, Romans 10:17-18

Age Level Concepts

- The apostolic Church of Jesus Christ means that we trace back our beginnings with the call, orientation of the apostles, and their teachings
- The Church begins with Jesus.
- The apostles were taught by him and were “sent out/forth” to spread Christ’s teachings.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson the learners are expected to:

- Trace how the Church came into being.
- Deliberate on the role of the Apostles in inculcating and spreading of the teachings of Jesus Christ which resulted to the birth of the Christian Church.

- Design means that would warrant the persistence of the spread of Christ’s teaching in this current times.

Materials: Bible, Paper and Pen

Biblical Background

Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 2:42-47, Romans 10:17-18

Matthew’s version of the Gospel ends with Jesus gathering the disciples on top of the mountain in Galilee. There he grants the disciples the warrant to proclaim the Good News to all. It is important to note the order of the verbs in this act of commissioning: go, make, baptize, and teach. Thus it could be said that if no one dares to go and proclaim the good news the making of disciples, the baptizing and the teaching cannot take place. The important thing however is that the text clearly shows that it is Jesus who gives the apostles the authority to do all these. And Jesus’ authority comes from God. His resurrection is clearly a proof of this. In commissioning the disciples to continue his mission Jesus expects obedience. With Jesus, there is no dichotomy between faith and obedience. It is faith and obedience that made Jesus do his ministry. It is faith and obedience that made the apostles fulfill their task thus resulting to the birth of the early church as recoded in the Acts the Apostles. The apostles ensured the continuance of teaching of the Gospel. The same formula is used in Romans 10:17-18. Faith comes from what is heard. How can people hear if no one goes to reach out and proclaim? We have the Christian and the Christian faith because Christ ministered and commissioned the disciples to go and proclaim the good news. More than that, they manifested their faith through their committed obedience. Without such nature the Church would not have been born.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Opening Hymn ”Be Now My Vision” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 275

Be now my vision, O God of my heart
 Nothing surpasses the love you impart
 You my best thought, by day or by night
 Waking or sleeping, your presence my light.

Be now my wisdom and be my true word
 Ever within me, my soul is assured
 Mother and Father, you are both to me
 Now and forever your child I will be.

Opening Prayer Request one of the learners tip lead in the prayer

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read the texts.

- a. Allow 2 or 3 learners to share a doctrine of the church that they know, how they came to know about it and if there is a specific teaching of Jesus related to it.
- b. Based on Matthew 28:19-20 point out what Jesus wants the disciples to do? How did the disciples respond to it?
- c. Make the learners do a rundown of what the Apostles must teach. Where are their teachings founded?

Lessons Learned

- What particular characteristics of the Apostles would you like to inculcate in your life that you think will help you share Christ's message to others and why?
- How is faith and obedience manifested in your own life and in the life and work of the Church of Jesus Christ?
- What particular doctrine of the church molded your life and why?

Applying the Lessons Learned

- Share one way by which you can help teach the teaching of Jesus Christ to others as the apostles did.
- Write your commitment on a piece of paper and offer it together with your offering during the worship.

Closing Time

Closing Hymn "The Church's One Foundation" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 242

The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord,
 We are Christ's new creation by water and the word
 From heaven Christ came and sought us in love to set us free
 With precious blood Christ bought us for all eternity.

Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth
 One charter of salvation, One God, one faith, one birth
 One name together blessing, one holy food we share
 To one hope we are pressing, at one in work and prayer.

Offering

Closing Prayer

Great and awesome God, we give you thanks for the lessons of the past.

We thank you for your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, whose life, teachings continues to mold and shape our live.

We give you thanks for the Apostles who dare to continue Christ's ministry even in the midst of adversities.

We give you thanks for the leaders of our times who like the apostles give their live for the sake of proclaiming the gospel.

Make us soft and pliant as a clay in your hands. Mold us into what you want us to be.

**MAY THE FAITH HANDED DOWN TO US BE MANIFESTED THROUGH
 OUR OBEDIENCE TO YOUR WILL. AMEN**

Lesson 9: What do we mean by “Protestant heritage?”

Communion Sunday

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

August 02, 2020

General Concept: Protestant heritage is a set of traditions and beliefs which we inherit from the Protestant reformers.

Biblical References: Deuteronomy 26:5-10, 2 Timothy 2:2

Age Level Concepts

- Protestant heritage is a set of traditions and beliefs which we inherit from the Protestant reformers.
- We affirm and live out our Protestant heritage.

Learning Objectives

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

- Decipher the significance of various traditions and belief inherited from the Protestant reformers.
- Explore diverse approaches in imbibing and affirming our protestant heritage.
- Plan on how to participate in the inculcation of the Protestant heritage to the younger generation.

Materials: Bible, Chart of various Protestant Traditions

Biblical Background

Deuteronomy 26:5-10

Deuteronomy records the speeches and teachings of Moses to the people of Israel in the last moments of his life. His teachings centered mainly on the Covenant God who fostered Israel in the wilderness, the laws included in the covenant and the essentiality of wholehearted obedience. Deuteronomy 26:5-10 is a liturgical recitation that recounts all the historical events that molded Israel’s monotheistic faith, their faith in Yahweh. This liturgical creed reviews God’s liberating acts as shown from the time Abraham journeyed to Canaan to the time God rescued them from the Egyptians and brought them back into the land God has promised, a land flowing with milk and honey. This text not only recounts Israel’s history in creedal form but it also explains why the Israelites must worship, honor and thank God. God has done marvelous deeds and has liberated them from bondage therefore God deserves to be worshipped. God alone deserves the first and the best fruits of their labor. The events and God’s interventions in the events narrated in this creed became the foundation of the basic beliefs and traditions of Israel. The basic belief include the following:

- a. Yahweh alone is to be worshipped
- b. Yahweh blesses those who are faithful and obedient
- c. The offering of firsts fruits in thanksgiving to Yahweh who blesses the land.

- d. Tithing
- e. Every three years the Israelites are to set aside a tenth of their produce. The said offering is intended for the widows, orphans and aliens.

2 Timothy 2:1-2

2nd Timothy is one of Paul's pastoral letters. The other pastoral letters are 1st Timothy and Titus. These letters contain instructions to his younger protégés. One of the basic instructions Paul gave to Timothy is to entrust to reliable people the things he learned from Paul. It could be noticed that in Paul's missionary journeys he took time to choose and train elders. He also took time to teach younger minister like Timothy and Titus. Paul emphasized that it is teaching and enabling others that faith in Christ is preserved in full. It is in teaching and enabling others that traditions are sustained.

Notes for the Teacher

Basic Protestant Beliefs and Doctrines handed down to us by the reformers.

1. ***Sola Scriptura*** or by scripture alone. It asserts that all church traditions, creeds, and teaching must be in accordance to the teaching of the Scripture as divinely inspired by the Word of God. It also asserts that it should be interpreted through itself.

Before the Reformation, the Bible was only printed in Latin, not in local languages understandable to the hearers. It's printing was controlled and censored by the Church including religious services. Church goers have no way of checking whether the priest's words were biblically coherent or not.

2. ***Sola Fide*** or by faith alone. It asserts that good deeds or works do not determine salvation, it is by faith alone.

Before the Reformation, the Church sold certificates that gives assurance of absolution from sins (indulgence). Only rich people could buy their way into heaven while the poor could not – which was opposite of what the Bible says.

3. ***Sola Gratia*** or by grace alone. This assertion excludes the merit done by a person as part of achieving salvation. Sola Gratia is the teaching that salvation comes by divine grace or "unmerited favor" only, not as something merited by the sinner. This means that salvation is an gift from God through Jesus Christ.

These teachings we inherited from our Protestant forerunners served as a rich foundation of the Protestant churches' life and faith today. We need to embrace and pass it on from our generation to another – just as Jacob's struggle and encounter with God led to changes that impacted Israel's life and faith journey.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time:

Opening Hymn “God, Speak to Me, That I May Speak” Hymnal of Faith Journey 307

God speak to me that I may speak
In living echoes of your tone
As you have sought so let me speak
Your erring children slotted and lone.

O lead me God that I may lead
Some wanderers along life’s way
O feed me so that I may feed
Your hungry ones without delay.

Opening Prayer (May be done through a song)
Suggested prayer song “Steadfast Love”

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Read the biblical text. Discuss the text by encouraging the learners to respond to the questions.

Guide Questions for discussion:

- What are some of Israel’s basic understanding of God? What religious traditions do they try to fulfill to show their understanding of God?
- How did these basic beliefs about God/Yahweh come about?
- Deuteronomy 26:5-10 is a basic creed of the Israelites. Another basic creed is found in Deuteronomy 6:4. What is the importance of creedal statements in the life of Israel as a nation and as people of God?

Lessons Learned

Identify some of the basic Protestant Beliefs and Doctrines handed down to us by the reformers.

Some of the basic beliefs and traditions handed down by the reformers are:

- a. Justification by grace through faith
 - b. Priesthood of all believers
 - c. Supremacy of the scripture in matters of faith and order.
 - d. The sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion.
- How were these traditions handed down to you and how did it affect your life as a member of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines?
 - What Protestant traditions would you like to keep and why?

Applying the Lessons Learned

Timothy was instructed by Paul to entrust to others what Paul taught him so that they too can instruct others. In what way could we be like Timothy?

Possible activities that could be done:

- Reach out to others to join study sessions.

- Strengthen family devotions
- Volunteer to teach the children and the youth.

Closing Time

Closing Hymn

“Faith of the Martyrs / Faith of our Fathers”

Hymnal of Faith Journey, 346

Faith of the martyrs living still, in spite of dungeon, fire and sword,
Oh how our hearts beat high with joy, when we recall their faith’s reward.
Faith of our martyrs living faith, we would be true in life and death.

Martyrs confined in prisons bleak were still in heart and conscience free,
And no less blessed will be our fate, if we like them live faithfully.
Faith of our martyrs living faith, we would be true in life and death.

Offering

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank you for the excellent sharing learning experience we have had today.

May we employ what we have learned so that we can become better followers of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

We pray that everything we do from here onward be in accordance with your will and purpose.

MAY YOU CONTINUE TO GRANT US WISDOM AND COURAGE WE LIVE AND SHARE OUR FAITH. AMEN.

Lesson 10: What do we mean by being a “reformed” church?

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 09, 2020

General Concept: The UCCP aligns itself with the Reformation movement of the 16th century that brought significant changes in the beliefs, system and structure of the Church then.

Biblical References: 2 Kings 22:1-20, Ephesians 2:8

Age Level Concepts

- The UCCP as a reformed church adheres to changes in the beliefs, system and structure brought about by the reformation movement.
- The church reformed itself to live in accordance with the Word of God.
- We affirm and live out our Protestant reformed heritage.

Learning Objectives

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

- Articulate the essence of being a “reformed” church.
- Examine the circumstances that warranted the necessity of reforming the church.
- Employ undertakings that would demonstrate the UCCP’s reformed heritage

Materials: Bible

Biblical Background

2 Kings 22:1-20

The text speaks about the reign and the reforms instituted by Josiah. Why was there a need for reform? Prior to Josiah’s reign Judah was headed by Manasseh who was later succeeded by his son Ammon. Both kings did what was evil in God’s sight. Manasseh allowed the worship of idols and foreign gods. He may have participated in the cult of Molloch which included the sacrifice of infants (2nd Kings 21:6). Prophets who prophesied against him were persecuted. Ammon followed what his father Manasseh did. This earned the ire of God and thus God proclaimed judgment on Manasseh (2nd Kings 21:11-13). This is the backdrop why Judah and Jerusalem was in a state of total disarray when Josiah started his reign. The temple which was in utter disrepair and the loss of the Book of Law or the Torah reflects Israel’s decadence and their disloyalty to God. Josiah who is described as a king who did what is good in the eyes of God instituted reforms. The reforms Josiah instituted can be classified into three:

1. Back to the temple
2. Back to the scripture
3. Back to God

Because of Josiah’s reforms the judgment on Judah and Jerusalem did not happen in his lifetime.(2nd Kings 22:18-20) In line with this, there are those who question the motive of Josiah’s reforms. Some said that he must have done it not really because of faith but because of fear that the God’s judgment for Jerusalem and Judah will happen in his reign. However it is clearly stated 2nd Kings 22:19 that his heart was really penitent that he humbled himself before the Lord. Josiah did what he could but it was because of God’s grace and mercy that Israel was spared from destruction.

Ephesians 2:8

In Ephesians 2, Paul constantly stressed that salvation is realized based on God’s grace. Paul does not want Christians to cogitate that salvation is merited through good works. What Christians ought to do is to have faith that God save and forgives and to keep on proclaiming the good news to all.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Opening Hymn

“Amazing Grace” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 208

Amazing grace , how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me

I once was lost but now I found, was blind but now I see.

T'was grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved,
How precious did that grace appear, the hour I first believed.

Opening Prayer (Request a participant to lead the prayer)

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- a. Read the text
- b. Discuss the text
 - How does the text describe Josiah?
 - What are the proofs that Josiah did what is right in the sight of God?
 - Why are the reforms necessary?
 - What is the result of Josiah's reforms?
 - Why was Israel spared from the wrath of God during Josiah's reign?

Lessons Learned

- Why is it necessary to institute reforms?
- What are the reasons why there are situations that call for reforms?
- Why does protestant reformation matter?
 - ✓ The protestant reformation made liturgy and church services accessible to the people.
 - ✓ It made the Bible accessible to the lay people.
 - ✓ It caused the Roman Catholic church to start its own reform.
 - ✓ It regained the "5 Solas"
 - a. Sola Scriptura – the Gospel is revealed through the scripture alone
 - b. Solus Christus – The Gospel is centered on Christ alone
 - c. Sola Gratia – Salvation is received by grace alone
 - d. Sola Fide - The gospel is received through faith alone
 - e. Soli Deo Gratia – the Gospel results in glory to God alone.

Applying the Lessons Learned

Choose one of the basic protestant heritage. Make a covenant with yourself that you will try to employ it in your life.

Example: The bible is made accessible to all. I will read and reflect on it daily and teach/share what I learn to my children, grandchildren or neighbors.

Write this covenant in a paper and put it in a place where you can see it every day.

Closing Time

Closing Hymn

"The Hands of God" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 295

The hands of God that make the whole creation new,
That guide us through the path that we must tread,
They lifted up the lowly and the poor,

Hands that put down the mighty from their thrones.

Refrain:

The hands of God that guide us through the years,
From doubts and fears those hands have led us through,
They call for faith and hope and love to reign in us
The hands of God that work through you and me.

The hand of God that make the church to live and grow,
That give its pow'r to face all fears and woes,
The hands that make for peace to reign all o'er us,
Are hands of God that work through you and me.

Closing Prayer

Loving God, thank you for you have gathered us here and reminded us of the significant and meaningful lesson of the past. May the glorious heritage we inherited from the reformers be a living reality in our lives. Amen.

Lesson 11: What are our distinguishing characters being a reformed church?

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
August 16, 2020

General Concept : A reformed church is Christ-centered, biblically grounded, missionary in character, has its own polity and set of beliefs.

Biblical References: John 15:15-16; Romans 11:36; Acts 20:28

Age Level Concepts

- A reformed church is Christ-centered, biblically grounded, missionary in character, has its own polity and set of beliefs.
- The UCCP bears the characters of a reformed church.
- We affirm our identity as a reformed church through our life and witness.

Learning Objectives

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

- Assay the very essence of being a reformed church of Christ.
- Ascertain the distinctive character a reformed church bears.
- Formulate a design on how to carry out the UCCP's identity as a reformed church.

Materials: Bible

Biblical Background

John 15:15-16

John 15 records Jesus' farewell speech and instructions to his disciples. The passage uses the image of the vine where Jesus likens himself to the main vine where all the branches are connected in order to live. The text stresses that having a strong relationship with Christ is the only way by which one can have a meaningful life. It is for this reason why Jesus refers to the disciples as friends and not servants. But as a friend, Jesus was more than willing to give his life so that others may live. The disciples must also be willing to do the same. As friends chosen by Jesus, the disciples are called to bear fruit and to love one another. In other words, those who are in Christ are called to create a community of friendship and care. To be Christ's friend, one must be willing to go where Christ goes and love whom Christ loves. Such commitment requires total renewal of oneself.

Romans 11:36

Romans 11:36 sums up the entirety of God. This prayer expresses the absolute dependence of all creation on God. Everything comes from God, is made by God and must live for God. It emphasizes that God has the sole claim on everything. Paul, in this text, professes that God deserves praise and glory because of God's mutual providence both for the Jews and the Gentiles in attaining salvation and salvation results from God's graciousness and not because God is indebted to humanity.

Acts 20:28

Acts 20:28 is part of Paul's farewell message to the leaders of the church in Ephesus. This message was delivered towards the end of his third missionary journey. In here, Paul manifests his grave concern for the church. In this brief text, Paul emphasized the following:

1. Elders or leaders of the church must always guard themselves and the flock they care for.
2. While human processes are involved in choosing leaders it is the Holy Spirit that transforms them into true leaders.
3. God purchased the church through God's own blood in Jesus Christ.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Opening Hymn "Let Us Sing to the Lord, Our God" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 11
Let us sing to the Lord, our God, with a fresh new song of adoration,
Let us sing to the Lord, our God, In every land and nation
Let us sing to the Lord, our God, and God's name we lift up and raise,
Let's proclaim God's salvation from day to day, with joyful signs of praise.

Opening Prayer. (Request someone to lead in prayer)

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Request one or two of the participants to read the texts.
- Guide questions for discussion:
 - a. Why does Paul emphasize that all glory belongs to God?

- b. How did the disciples or apostle glorify God?
- c. What are examples of the fruits that the disciples or the apostles bear?
- d. Differentiate the words “servant” and ”friend”based on John 15:15
- e. Why did Jesus call the disciples friends instead of servants?
- f. What does this mean in terms of the disciples’ relationship with Jesus?
- g. How would you describe the disciples’ relationship with Christ?
- h. What does Jesus expect from the disciples?
- i. What does Jesus expect from the disciples, from the Christian converts and from the church in general?

Lessons Learned

- Describe your relationship with Christ? Would you consider your faith as Christ centered? How is you Christ-centered faith manifested in your daily life?
- How are the following natures of the reformed church manifested in the your local church:
 - Christ-centeredness
 - Missionary
 - Biblically grounded

Applying the Lessons Learned

Plan for a “Stock the Pantry” activity.

- Choose needy families and stock their pantry with basic essentials. If 1 family is chosen each week 52 families could benefit in 1 year.
- Have a prayer meeting in the home of the beneficiary.

Closing Time

Closing Hymn

“What A Friend We Have In Jesus”

Hymnal of Faith Journey, 215

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and grief to bear,

What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.

Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh, what needless pain we bear,

all because we do not carry, everything to God in prayer.

Offering

Closing Prayer

Lord, we thank you for the blessing of reading and studying your word together. We ask that these words of life, truth and hope would continue to inspire us today and all the coming days. We ask that your love, grace and mercy follow us as we go on with our daily lives and as we continue to live as reformed church centered and anchored on you. We ask all this in the wonderful name of Jesus. Amen.

Lesson 12: What do we mean by “reforming church”?

Mission Sunday

First Sunday in Kingdomtide

August 23, 2020

General Concept: The UCCP as a reforming church continues to uphold changes in accordance to God's word and the call of times

Biblical References: Luke 5:37; Galatians 6:9

Age Level Concepts

- The UCCP as reforming church continues to uphold changes in accordance to God's word and the call of times
- We constantly evaluate the life work of our church
- We work for the continuous reformation of our church

Learning Objectives

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

- Analyze the contemporary state of the community where the church does its mission.
- Appraise the responses of the church in relation to the call of the times.
- Determine systems that would guarantee the compassionateness in the midst of the changing times.

Materials: Bible, Pictures of different situations in the community, Manila Paper, Paste/scotch tape

Biblical Background

Luke 5:37

In Jesus' time, wine containers were usually made of animal skin. There were already ceramic containers but travelers especially those going on a long journey prefer to use containers made from animal skin as it was easier to carry. But after a time, it becomes brittle and easily bursts. New wine would easily cause the old wine skin to burst when it ferments. Thus a new wine requires a new wineskin.

In this parable Jesus teaches that there is a right way of doing things in a given situation. The formula in making the wine is the same as in the past and so is the material used in preparing the wineskin. What is the difference? The condition! The wine is new. In Jesus Christ, God has done something new. Christ proclaims a new understanding of God's Kingdom, one that is responsive to the times. What are some of the newness that Christ proclaims? Luke 5:17-39 clearly presents how different Christ's teaching is from those of the Pharisees. He forgives sin and shows compassion to those deemed by the society as sinners. He even dares to go against the norms set by an oppressive society. Jesus saw that the sinners and the sick need his compassion, a character which the Pharisees do not profess. In the parable of the wineskin, Jesus teaches that the good news of salvation ought to be responsive to the signs of times.

Galatians 6:9

Paul, after his first missionary visit, heard that the churches in Galatia has fallen into hard times and into errors because of the rising influence of the Judaizers. Judaizers are Christian converts who continue to adhere to the Mosaic Law and making it a requirement for Christian living. In this letter Paul emphasized the superiority of justification by faith and sanctification by the Holy Spirit versus the works of the law which are mainly ceremonial. The Christians in Galatia are clinging on religious practices for they felt that faith must be expressed in concrete ways. But Paul tells them that if they are anxious to put faith into life then they ought to develop their community life and not limit themselves to ritualistic practices. It is for this reason that Paul urges the Christians in Galatia to be steadfast in doing good.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time:

Opening Hymn “O Let Us Praise God” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 6

O let us praise God, O let us praise God, the mighty and great Lord,
Let us gather to give thanks with our gladness of praise,
O proclaim God’s name forever now, to Echo through-out the world,
O praise God in heaven, O praise God here on earth.

O seek God’s blessings, O seek God’s blessings, O you people of God,
Truly serve God without fail and follow God each day,
Take the love of God with you and share it wherever you will go,
Life’s bountiful blessings to you God will bestow.

Opening Prayer (To be led by one of the participants)

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- a. Read the text
- b. Suggested guide question for group discussion:
 - Luke 5:37 – the facilitator should have a forehand analysis of the preceding verses starting from Luke 5:17
 - What prompted Jesus to relate the parable of the wineskin?
 - What ministries were being done by Jesus and who were the recipients?
 - What were the various reactions of the people surrounding Jesus especially the Pharisees?
 - What is the newness that Jesus is bringing forth?
 - Galatians 6:9
 - What was the cause of the conflict in the churches in Galatia?
 - What are the possible reasons why Paul urged the Galatians not to grow tired in doing what is good?
 - What are some of the good things Christians must do that Paul suggested based on verses 1-9?

Lessons Learned

- During Jesus and Paul’s time there were various needs, conflicts, problems and challenges that needs to be met or addressed. At this time, what are the needs, problems, conflicts and challenges that needs to be addressed?
- Activity:
 - Let each participant choose a picture/pictures which he or she thinks reflects the condition of the society. Allow the participants to mount the pictures in the Manila paper or on the blackboard.
 - Spend a few moment of silence to allow them to reflect on what the church has done or is doing in response to the various situations.
 - Let them share their ideas.

Applying the Lessons Learned

Let them identify what still needs to be changed or reformed:

- At the personal level
- Church level
- Community level

Closing Time

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, let us all remember, a heritage of faithfulness
 Of Argentina men and women, devoted to Christ’s way,
 Covenanting as one together, with God’s Spirit, sole Enabler.

Offering

Closing Prayer

- Let each share their commitment towards continually reforming the church in one sentence.
- The minister will give the blessing.

Lesson 13: Why do we need to continuously reform?

Second Sunday in Kingdomtide

August 30, 2020

General Concept: The UCCP continues to reform itself in order to be relevant and responsive to the challenges of these changing times.

Biblical References : Jeremiah 26:12-13; 1 Corinthians 13:9-11

Age Level Concepts

- The UCCP continues to reform itself to be relevant in its response to the challenges of these changing times.

- The UCCP continues to reform itself to effectively and efficiently respond to the needs of its members.
- We commit ourselves to the church's efforts to continuously seek change in order to be relevant and responsive to the call of times.

Learning Objectives

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

- Determine the challenges that church must confront in these changing times.
- Explain the purpose and necessity of the incessant reforming nature of the church.
- Propose venues where church members and leaders would have opportunities for growth, improvement and deepening of their faith and involvement in church and community life.

Materials: Bible, Mirror (preferably a full length mirror but a hand mirror will also do)

Biblical Background

Jeremiah 26:12-13

Jeremiah witnessed the most critical event in Israel's history which is the Babylonian exile and the fall of Judah. Judah's defeat and the exile of its leading citizens to Babylon has been viewed by Jeremiah as God's judgment on Israel. The leaders and the people of Israel failed to be faithful to the covenant Yahweh fostered with them. Prophets, including Jeremiah, have reminded them of their waywardness. The messages and reminders however have fallen on deaf ears. Jeremiah 26:12-13 is one of those reminders. Jeremiah urges the people to amendment of life, while there is time. He even went to the point of assuring them that God will change his mind and will not allow utter destruction to befall upon them. But instead of listening the leaders and the people responded with anger declaring that Jeremiah deserves to die. Indeed in 587 BC, the most devastating destruction happened. Judah was defeated by the Babylonians. The wall and the temple of Jerusalem was totally razed to the ground and Judah's leading citizens were brought as exiles to Babylon.

1 Corinthians 13:9-11

1st Corinthians 3 is considered as one of the most frequently quoted biblical texts. It is often used in wedding meditations because of the message of that emphasizes the primacy of love. This chapter speaks of the very nature and character of a believer in Christ. But who among the believer could fully achieve to have this very nature? Paul, verses 9-11, speaks of going through a process of transformation. When Paul said "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways" he was probably talking about how he overcame his childish ways. We know nothing about Paul's childhood but what is clear however is that there was a time in his life when he thought and acted like a child. There was a time in his life when he had an infantile and misguided belief. What we do know however was that he was once a Pharisee who led the persecution of Christians. In fact he was one of those who approved the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58-60). But Paul went through a process of renewal and became an evangelist and one of the staunch defender of the Christian faith.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Opening Hymn "Search Me, O God" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 216

Search me O God, and know my heart today

Try me O Savior, know my thoughts I pray,

See if there be some wicked way in me,

Cleanse me from every sin and set me free.

I praise you Lord, for cleansing me from sin

Fulfill your Word and make me pure within

Fill me with fire, where once I burned in shame,

Grant my desire to magnify your name.

Opening Prayer

Our Father and our God, we bless your name forever. There is none like you on earth or in heaven. We come together this morning in your presence to sing your praises and study your word that we may be enlightened and that our faith may be deepened and strengthened. Bless us with your presence and guidance that we may have a meaningful encounter with you and with each other. Amen

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- a. Read the texts
- b. Discuss the text using the following guide questions:
 - Describe Israel's relationship with God.
 - How did they deal with the covenant that God fostered with them?
 - How did God deal with the Israelites?
 - What was Jeremiah's exhortation to the people?
 - How did the people of Judah respond especially the priests and the leaders?
 - Based on 1st Corinthians 13 what character is expected from every follower of Christ?
 - What did Paul mean when he said "When I was a child I spoke like a child...? How is this connected with the growth and transformation of the early Christians?

Lessons Learned

- Compare Israel's nature with the present context of our church and community?
- What is the significance of Jeremiah's exhortation in our present context?
- Why is the church in need of constant renewal?
 - ✓ The church exists in an ever changing world.
 - ✓ The church is in need of constant renewal and reformation because it is made up of imperfect individuals.

- ✓ Even the disciples and apostles were imperfect.
 - Paul was a persecutor of the Christian faith.
 - Peter was rash and even denied Jesus.

- What will happen if the Christian churches all over refuse to undergo renewal and transformation?

Applying the Lessons Learned

Object Lesson: Let each participant look in the mirror and reflect on the following:

- What is the best thing that I appreciate in me?
- What change do I hope to achieve to become a better Christian and a better member or officer of the church?
- The facilitator may end with this reminders:
 “As individuals and as church we are called to grow, change, deepen our faith, repent, improve and even learn from our successes and failures to achieve the holiness and purity the God has planned for us. We need to do these not merely for ourselves but for the mission that has been entrusted to us. Let us not forget that the world’s cultures and conditions keep on changing. As Christ’s followers we must be at par with all these to become better harbingers of God’s message.”

Closing Time

Closing Hymn “Change my heart, O God”
 Change my heart oh God make it ever true
 Change my heart oh God may I be like You (Repeat

You are the potter I am the clay
 Mold me and make me this is what I pray

Change my heart oh God make it ever true
 Change my heart oh God may I be like You (Repeat)

Offering

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for this time. Thank you for your word. We pray for these words and for the lessons learned to be written in our hearts. And may it resonate in our minds for the rest of the day and all the days to come. Amen.

Lesson 14: Why is UCCP a united church?

CEN Sunday

Third Sunday in Kingdomtide
 September 06, 2020

General Concept: We are united because we have a common mission to proclaim Christ and our unity gives credibility to our witness and service.

Biblical References: Psalms 133:1; Ephesians 4:3; John 17:21

Age Level Concepts

- We are united because we have a common mission to proclaim Christ
- Our unity enhances our witness and service
- We are united through the organic union of different denominations and traditions.
- We pray and work to uphold the unity of the church.

Learning Objectives

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

- Illuminate the common mission that makes UCCP a united church.
- Review the story of UCCP
- Assess the various elements that challenge the unity of the church
- Ascertain approaches that would enhance UCCPs unity for the furtherance of its witness and service to the community

Materials: Bible

Biblical Background

Psalms 133:1; Ephesians 4:3; John 17:21

The major theme in these texts is unity of all believers. In Psalm 133:1 kindred does not really mean biological family or blood relatives but rather it refers to people joined together by the grace of God.

In Ephesians 4:3, Paul humbly pleads to the Christian converts in Ephesus to maintain their unity in Christ. Paul aims to remind them that the wall that rives the Jews and the Gentiles had been brought down. In Christ there is no racial or tribal distinction. Each believer is part of the fold regardless of status, race or spiritual gifts the he or she has.

Jesus himself prayed for the unity of all the believers. In this beautiful worded priestly prayer of Jesus prior to his passion and death, he expresses his deep longing for the unity of all believers. But in praying for unity, Christ does not demand institutional unification and or uniformity of religious practices. Jesus' prayer for unity must not be detached from one of the major themes of the Johanne writing which is God's great love for all. The unifying aspect is not the specific doctrines or practices but the all-encompassing love of God. This love of God must be shown in how we reach out to others and put their needs above our own. When believers are united in God's love and when they become vessels thru which love would permeate in this world people would come to believe in the one true God.

A Brief Story about UCCP

Our church, the UCCP, was formed on May 25 1948 in an assembly held in Ellinwood Malate Church in Manila. The churches who joined the assembly were: first, the Evangelical Church of the Philippines (whose members were the *Church of the Disciples of Christ* and segments of the IEMELIF – *Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en las Islas Filipinas*); second, the United Evangelical Church (whose members were the *Presbyterian Church*, the *Congregationalist Church*, and the *United Brethren Church*); and third, the Philippine Methodist Church (a split from the Methodist Episcopal Church). During the assembly, the leaders and representatives from these different churches agreed to unite and form the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.

This is the reason why we say that our church is composed of many churches, but are united for a common mission to proclaim Christ.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Opening Hymn ”Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 113
Love, divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heaven and earth be found,
Fix in us a humble dwelling, all your faithful mercies crown,
Jesus, you are all compassion, pure, unbound love impart,
Visit us with your salvation, enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe your loving Spirit into every troubled breast,
Let us all in you inherit, let us find your promised rest,
Take away our love of sinning, Alpha and Omega be,
End of faith as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Opening Prayer (Request one of the participants to pray)

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- a. Request one of the participants to read the text.
- b. Discuss the text. Guide questions for discussion:
 - What does Jesus, Paul and the Psalmist say about unity?
 - What kind of unity does Jesus pray for?
 - What is the purpose why Jesus, Paul and the Psalmist urge the believers to be united?
 - ✓ Psalm 133:3 – the blessings of eternal life
 - ✓ John 17:21 – the world will believe
 - ✓ Ephesians 4 – Peaceful community life.

Lessons Learned

- What makes Christian unity important?
 - ✓ It is a major factor for the success in our witness to the world.
- What unites the church?

- ✓ We are united because we have a common mission to proclaim Christ.
- How did UCCP came to become united?
 - ✓ UCCP became united through the organic union of different denominations and traditions.
- How would you rate the church's effort towards unity in Christ and in Christ's mission?
- What factors affect the unity of the church?

Applying the Lessons Learned

Object Lesson: "Stick Broom Challenge"

- a. Give each participant a coconut midrib.
- b. Tell them to break it.
- c. Challenge one of the participant to break the midribs that gathered as one stick broom.

Lesson: "In unity there is strength."

Jesus prayed that we may all be one. What can we do in response of Jesus' prayer?

- Look for a common ground or a basis of unity.
- Plan inter-church, inter-fellowship or inter-organizational events
- Listen even to the objectors for we might learn important lessons from them.
- Humility in accepting shortcomings
- Celebrating successes

Closing Time

Closing Hymn "Christian Unity" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 272

Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray that our life Shell be,
 Living channels of faith and love, Christian unity,
 Bless, O Christ we humbly pray, this our Christian unity,
 So, our faith and love shall be following your way.

Our commitment be renewed to your mission Lord,
 Make us channels of unity following your way.
 Bless, O Christ we humbly pray, this our Christian unity,
 So, our faith and love shall be following your way.

Offering

Prayer for Unity

How we praise and thank You for the diversity of gifts and graces within the body of Christ and the beautiful variety and variance of the characters, personalities, peoples, interests and activities that are represented throughout the whole Church of God.

May brotherly love and godly gentleness be the precious garment with which we are all clothed, and may we be of one mind and united in spirit and humble in heart, having the same love, and working together with one intent, united in purpose.

May we focus our thoughts on what we all hold dear, and may we be united in the essential doctrine of Christ and yet demonstrate grace and liberty on those ideologies and dogmas that too often have caused splits in the Body, rather than encouraging brotherly love and gracious liberty.

May we put aside our personal agendas and any exclusive churchmanship maxims that may give rise to ungodly, unnecessary or schismatic arguments. And may our Lord Jesus Christ, Who shed His blood on the cross and rose again to give us life, be the one to Whom we all focus our gaze and in Whose name we pray, Amen.

(Taken from: <https://prayer.knowing-jesus.com/Prayers-on-Unity>)

Lesson 15: What are the manifestations of our being a united church?

Children's Sunday

Fourth Sunday in Kingdomtide

September 13, 2020

General Concept: The UCCP being a united church is manifested in its collective confession, in its common practices despite diverse heritage; in its common vision, mission and goals; polity and programs.

Biblical References: Philippians 2:1-7; Ephesians 2:19-21

Age Level Concepts

- The UCCP manifests its being a united church in its collective confession, in its common practices despite diverse heritage; in its common vision, mission and goals; polity and programs.
- The UCCP is unique in its character and structure.

Learning Objectives

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

- Appraise the UCCP's vision, mission and goals; polity and programs.
- Illuminate the UCCP's collective confession and traditions even with its diverse heritage.
- Integrate UCCP's faith confession in all aspects of personal, church and community life and involvement.

Materials: Bible

Biblical Background

Philippians 2:1-7

For many Christians, Philippians 2:5-7 is part of what is known as the Christ Hymn or Christ Poem which goes on up to verse 11. This poem is significant because it suggests that there were early Christians who believed that Jesus was a pre-existent celestial being who chose to come in human form to be one with humanity. This is where Paul draws the concept of the combination of

unity and humility. In Greek mythology, Zeus who is the god of the sky also appears in human form. However, he comes in human form to play tricks or bring havoc to mortals. This is not so with Christ. Jesus Christ is God who became human to be in solidarity with humanity in all their struggles. It is for this reason that Paul appeals to the Christians to live a Christ-like by living in unity and humility. Selfish ambitions and conceit should have no place in a Christian community. He reminds the believers that even Christ did not exploit his being God. Fostering such kind of character was probably difficult for many of the residents of Philippi were retired Roman military men. They may have owned slaves and was used to always being at the top or being in command. In Philippians 2, Paul invokes a series of qualities necessary in living a Christ-like life:

- Fellowship/Koinonia
- Having the same mind with Christ – looking at things, situations and people from Christ’s point of view.
- Humility
- Selflessness – putting aside ones selfish interest.

Ephesian 2:19-21

Most of the members of the Christian Church in Ephesus were of Gentile birth. This meant that they are not originally part of the covenant God made with the Israelites. Yet Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, assured the Gentile converts that they are citizens of the household of God. They are not aliens or strangers. The household is one of the metaphors used by Paul to convey his messages to the Christians of his time. In the Greco-Roman world, the household does not only mean the biological family. It includes even the slaves and the servants. When he says “household of God” it means everything that God owns and has created. In adhering to the Christian faith, the division between the Jews and Gentiles has been abolished. Here are some of the things we ought to remember:

- We are all one family in Christ
- We are one building as we are built on one foundation. That foundation is Jesus Christ.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Opening Hymn “Come, We Who Love God’s Name” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 265
Come, we who love God’s name and let our joys be known,
Together God’s great love proclaim and thus surround the throne.

Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God,
But we our thanks and praise will bring for love so deep and broad.

Opening Prayer (Request a participant to lead in the prayer)

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- a. Read the text
- b. Divide the group into two. Assign 1 text for each group to discuss.

- c. Guide questions for discussion:
- What must be the main foundation or basis of unity in the church?
 - What are the concrete manifestations of unity in the church or in the household of God?

Summarize the group sharing.

Lessons Learned

- How is unity manifested at home, in the church and in the community?
- What is the “mind of Christ” and how do we know if it is in us as individuals and as a church?
- Present pictures depicting scenes like a hungry child, poor peasants, jobless and homeless people etc. How would have Jesus Christ responded to the various situations?
- If you or the church have the mind of God or Christ what would be your response to these situations?
- In what way does UCCP’s VMG reflect the mind of Christ?
- How does humility affect the unity of the household of God?

Applying the Lessons Learned

The United Church of Christ in the Philippines was born out of the union of the following Protestant Denominations in 1948. Each denomination has its own traditions and polity.

Congregational Church	Presbyterian Church	Church of the Disciples of Christ	United Brethren	The Philippine Methodist Church
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The congregation is the highest decision making body of the church. ● Emphasizes on the autonomy of the local church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The ruling elders/presbyters govern the local congregation / church (<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local churches should be independent and autonomous. ● Church membership should be based on the New Testament. ● Call themselves as Brotherhood rather than denomina- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adopted a simple church organization and adopted the Methodist polity ● Started to Self-support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Government of local church is Episcopal in nature, which is governed by the bishops or overseers. ● Bishop has the highest authority over the affairs of the local church.

		Timon		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Christian character is the measure of church membership. ● Christ is the center of worship and the Bible as sufficient rule of faith. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Practice simple form of worship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jesus Christ is the only Lord and Savior. ● Adult baptism ● Practice foot washing ● Celebrates communion every week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adopted Methodist practice and beliefs ● Singing is their distinguishing mark like the Methodist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Believes that a sinner is justified before God by faith alone ● Practice strict study of the Bible and worship ● Singing is a distinguishing mark ● Hymns are one of the vehicles of their beliefs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Built hospitals in Mindanao and started literacy among adults which is later called Adult Education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build school in Visayas like Silliman Institute and hospital in Ilo-ilo. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Established schools and schools in North Luzon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Started Women's Bible Training School, organized Christian Endeavour Societies and Tithers League 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Established schools in the North
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Undertook extensive evangelistic work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Influential in the rise and growth of ecumenical movement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Missionary-minded and deeply interested in ecumenism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Missionary-minded and good in literacy education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Missionary-minded and deeply interested in education

(Taken from the study material "Reclaiming Our dynamic Heritage: renewing our Commitment to Mission and Unity")

Considering these uniqueness, what plan of actions would you propose to deepen and strengthen the unity of the church?

- Possible answers:
 - ✓ Continuing study of other traditions
 - ✓ Since the church is also composed of unique individual members maybe the church council or the various church organizations can think of activities that would enhance interpersonal relationship.
 - ✓ Plan for an inter-age-level activities.

Closing Time

Closing Hymn “In Christ There is no East or West” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 271
In Christ there is no east or west, in him no south or north,
But one community of love through out the whole wide earth.

In Christ shall true hearts everywhere their high communion find,
His service is the golden cord close binding humankind.

Join hands disciples of the faith whate'er your race may be,
All children of the living God are surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west in him meet south and north,
All loving hearts are one in him, throughout the whole wide earth.

Offering

Prayer for Unity

Gracious and loving God, your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Thank you for the opportunity to live in your light and walk in your path. We pray that the things you have disclosed to us today and the thoughts we have imparted to each other may dwell in our hearts and move us into action. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.