

## Lesson 16: *Why is UCCP a “uniting church”?*

### Youth Sunday

Fifth Sunday in Kingdomtide

September 20, 2020

**General Concept:** The UCCP is a uniting church because we continue to seek organic union, as well as conciliar union, with other faith communities.

**Biblical References:** *Isaiah 56:8*; John 17:21-23; 10:16

### Age Level Concepts

- The UCCP is a uniting church because we continue to seek organic union or even conciliar union, with other faith communities.
- To seek organic union means to bring about a unity of communities into a common structure, governance and set of beliefs.

### Learning Objectives

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

- State reasons why UCCP is a uniting church
- Appreciate the stories of organic unions of churches before it became UCCP
- Share experiences of how the local church relate with other faith communities
- Affirm that UCCP continues to seek organic or conciliar union with other faith communities

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

### Biblical Background

John 17:21-23; 10:16

In the final part of his prayer, Jesus prays for those who will believe through the preaching of that initial group of disciples and so become God's new people, the Christian church. He prays that the same unity as exists between the Father and the Son will bind the believers together, so that through them others too will believe ([John 17:20-23](#)). Jesus desires that in the age to come, when he enjoys the glory that was his before the world began, all who have trusted in him will be there with him. Meanwhile, in the present world of unbelief, they will learn more of him as they share in the love that the Father has for the Son. The world will begin to know God when it sees the love of Jesus in his people ([John 17:24-26](#)).

The flock of Jesus consists not merely of those in the sheepfold of Israel, but includes people of all nations and languages. They are drawn together as one flock under the shepherd Jesus. The understanding between the shepherd and the sheep is the same as the understanding between the Father and the Son ([John 10:14-16](#)). The basis of the relationship between Jesus and his flock is his death and resurrection. He has complete

authority over life and death, and his enemies are powerless to take his life from him. Yet he willingly lays down that life so that he might save his people (John 10:17-18; cf. Acts 20:28).

Isaiah 56:8

God reminds the people that life in the rebuilt nation must be based on law. This applies to laws that concern social justice as well as those that concern religious practices (56:1-2).

When the Jews returned to Jerusalem, some Gentile converts returned with them. Among these were several eunuchs, possibly people who were previously connected with the palaces in Babylon and Persia. The law of Moses made it plain that eunuchs were to be excluded from the tabernacle worship, probably to discourage the Israelites from making their own people eunuchs (Deuteronomy 23:1). But in the new Jerusalem all foreigners, eunuchs or otherwise, who honour God and keep the law should be allowed to worship in the temple along with godly Israelites (3-5).

Love and obedience towards God, not physical or national characteristics, are the important things in God's sight. The temple is for the use of all people, not just Jews, because God's mercy is for all people (6-8). (The Bridgeway Bible Commentary)

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Announcement and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Songs "Come, We Who Love God's Name"

Hymnal of Faith Journey, 265

Come, we who love God's name, and let your 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.

Then let our songs abound, and every tear be dry;  
we're traveling through Emmanuel's ground, to greater worlds on high.

Opening Prayer (to be led by the facilitator)

## Learning Time

### *Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask two from among the learners to read the biblical texts.

Ask the following questions based on the reading:

*John 17:21-23;10:16*

1. What could be the reason/s Jesus why uttered the prayer in the garden?
2. What are the prevailing themes you can draw out from the prayer of Jesus?
3. Based on the prayer, what does Jesus want his followers strive to do?

*Isaiah 56:8*

1. Who were expected to return to Jerusalem after being released from exile?
2. How are the people supposed to live their life when they go back to their city?
3. What are the changes the people are expected to take in relation to their religious life?

### *Lessons Learned*

Show the video about the UCCP story especially on the portion of the efforts for organic union before 1948.

Reflect on the following:

1. “WHEREAS, The idea of one world can be strengthened by the unity of the Churches; (RESOLUTION EXPRESSING BELIEF IN AND ADHERENCE TO AN ECUMENICAL CHURCH General Assembly 12-17 May 1952

*What do you think our leaders mean by these words?*

2. “WHEREAS, The United Church of Christ in the Philippines, while it is a united Church, is also a uniting Church; (RESOLUTION EXPRESSING BELIEF IN AND ADHERENCE TO AN ECUMENICAL CHURCH General Assembly 12-17 May 1952)

*How would you articulate this declaration of the church?*

3. WHEREAS, It was Christ's prayer that we all may be one; (RESOLUTION EXPRESSING BELIEF IN AND ADHERENCE TO AN ECUMENICAL CHURCH General Assembly 12-17 May 1952)

What do you think is the implication of this statement to the character of UCCP?

*Applying the Lessons Learned*

SHARING. Ask the learners to share:

- a. Their experiences as to how they relate with other faith communities before and today
- b. The intentions in relating with other faith communities
- c. The results (positive and negative) of relating with other faith communities
- d. The local church plan in establishing a relationship or connection with other faith communities

**Closing Worship**

Offertory

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

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

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

Closing Prayer (Ask the Pastor, if present or an elder to lead in a prayer to end the session)

*Lesson 17: Where do we base the UCCP doctrines and beliefs?*

Fellowship of the Least Coin Sunday

Sixth Sunday in Kingdomtide

September 27, 2020

**General Concept:** The doctrines and beliefs of the UCCP are based on the Word of God as revealed in the Holy Scripture.

**Biblical References:** Isaiah 51:7-8; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

### **Age Level Concepts**

- The doctrines and beliefs of the UCCP are based on the Word of God as revealed in the Holy Scripture
- We adhere and live out the doctrines and beliefs of our church

### **Learning Objectives**

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

- Internalize the importance of the Holy Scripture as basis of the church's doctrines and beliefs
- Affirm that UCCP is biblically grounded in its beliefs and doing mission
- Share how the Word of God through the Holy Scripture strengthened their faith and life as a local church.

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

### **Biblical Background**

Matthew 4:4

Immediately after being appointed to his messianic ministry, Jesus was tempted by Satan to use his messianic powers in the wrong way. (For the identification of the devil with Satan see [Revelation 20:2](#).) Satan's aim was to make Jesus act according to his own will instead of in obedience to his Father.

Jesus had gone many weeks without eating and was obviously very hungry. Satan therefore used Jesus' natural desire for food to suggest that he should use his supernatural powers to create food and eat it. Jesus knew that food was necessary for a person's physical needs, but he also knew that obedience to God was more important. God alone would decide when and how his fast would end ([Matthew 4:1-4](#)).

To a believer, the Word of God is much as important as food. Like when a person eats, the food gets digested by his/her body and become part of the his/her body system. Jesus demonstrated that God's words has been part of his person. In every case, Jesus answered the temptations by quoting words from the Scriptures indicating that these experiences are not new to him. Jesus in a way demonstrated to the Tempter that just as God was with the people in the wilderness, God is also with him.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Paul refers to his own experiences to illustrate the truth that the person who whole-heartedly follows God must expect persecution. Timothy was well aware of this, even before he joined Paul in his work. In his own neighbourhood he had seen Paul suffer because of his devotion to Christ (10-12; cf. Acts 13:50; Acts 14:5-6; Acts 14:19; Acts 16:1-2). This shows in a clearer light the difference between the true teacher and the false. The latter gains a following only by turning away from the truth of God (13).

There is little likelihood that Timothy will be easily led astray by false teaching. From childhood he has been guided by the Scriptures, and his faith in those Scriptures gives him assurance in his salvation (14-15). He must maintain this confidence, knowing that the Scriptures are divinely given and that they are God's means of instructing people in right belief and right living. Those who are well instructed in the Scriptures will always be ready when an opportunity arises to do good (16-17).

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song “Thy Word” by Amy Grant

*Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet  
And a light unto my path  
Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet  
And a light unto my path*

*When I feel afraid, think I've lost my way  
Still You're there right beside me  
Nothing will I fear as long as you are near  
Please be near me to the end.*

Opening Prayer (ask a woman to lead in prayer)

#### **Learning Time**

*Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Bible Game. Tell the learners that they are going to test themselves as to how quick they can find a text from the Bible. Each should have a Bible of the same version and language.

Divide the class into two or three groups. The group who gets the high score wins.

Texts for Bible drill:

- John 16:13; 2 Peter 1:21; Mark 7:13; Isaiah 8:20;

- Revelations 22:18; 1 Timothy 3:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:15;
- Proverbs 30:5; Acts 13:46; Matthew 18:18; Job 23:12; Romans 10:17  
Ask someone to read the biblical texts found in Matthew 4:4 and 2 Timothy 3: 16-17.

Ask the following questions:

- a. How would you describe the condition or situation of Jesus and Timothy?
- b. What is the significance of the Holy Scriptures to the life and faith of both Jesus and Timothy?
- c. What affirmations about the Holy Scriptures can we draw out from the temptation experience of Jesus and the struggle of Timothy?

### *Lessons Learned*

Sharing of Affirmations. Encourage the learners to share a belief or conviction which has significance and influence in their life and faith with biblical support. Check if their belief is in line with UCCP's Statement of Faith.

After the sharing, ask the learners, "How would you react to people who claim that the UCCP teachings are not biblically grounded?"

### *Applying the Lessons Learned*

Let the class to recite the UCCP affirmation about the Bible.

"We believe, that the Holy Bible is a faithful and inspired witness of God's self revelation in Jesus Christ and in history, to illumine, guide correct and edify believers in their faith and witness."

## **Closing Worship**

Offertory

Closing Song "Wonderful Words of Life" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 358  
Sing them over again to me, wonderful words of life,  
Let me more of their beauty see, wonderful words of life;  
Words of life and beauty, teach me faith and duty.

Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life,  
Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life.

Closing Prayer ( Ask the pastor if present or a member of the UCM to close  
the session with a prayer)

**Lesson 18: *What doctrines and beliefs are articulated in the historic Christian creeds?***

World Communion Sunday/CYAF Sunday

Seventh Sunday in Kingdomtide

October 04, 2020

**General Concept:** The doctrines and beliefs of the UCCP that are articulated in the historic Christian creeds are: God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, church, sin, judgement, salvation, resurrection, eternal life and second coming.

**Biblical References:** Exodus 3: 1-15; *Matthew 25:31-46*

**Age Level Concepts**

- The doctrines and beliefs of the UCCP that are articulated in the historic Christian creeds are: God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, church, sin, judgement, salvation, resurrection, eternal life and second coming.
- We adhere and live out the doctrines and beliefs of our church expressed in the Christian creeds.
- Examples of the historic creeds (placed as Appendix in our Constitution and By-Laws) are the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed.

**Learning Objectives**

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

- Tell the significance of the Christian Creeds to our Christian affirmations today
- Compare the Christian creeds with the UCCP Statement of Faith
- Affirm to live out the doctrines and beliefs of our church expressed in the Christian creeds

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

**Biblical Background**

Exodus 3:1-15

If Moses was to present himself to the people of Israel as the one who would lead them out of Egypt, he would need to convince them that he knew God's purposes for them. But he doubted whether they would understand, since they did not know the character of whom they vaguely called the God of their ancestors. In asking God for help in



explaining God's purposes to them, Moses was wanting to know not simply the name of God, but the character of the God who owned that name (13).

When confronted with the question of a name, God summarized the revelation in one or two words. The name the God announced to Moses on this occasion was 'I am'.

The name 'I am' and the few words of divine explanation that accompanied it were deliberately mysterious, for God's concern was not to satisfy curiosity, but to make God known to those who wished to know. God's name indicated a character that would be revealed in the triumphant events to come. The eternal, unchangeable, ever-present, ever-active God would prove to be always dependable and completely able to meet every need of the people. God would be whatever character God would choose to prove that God would be in the varied circumstances Israel would meet (14-17).

Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus' third example opens with a description of his return in power and glory to judge the world. His judgment reveals that, no matter what nation a person may come from, there are only two types of people in the world, compared in the story to sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31-33).

The 'sheep' are God's people, who give proof of this by the practical love they show to others, often at the expense of their own convenience and comfort. Because they are unselfish, they may not be aware of all the good they do or the appreciation that others have of their kindness. But Jesus notices. He has so identified himself with the needy that he sees any kindness done to them as kindness done to himself (Matthew 25:34-40).

The 'goats', by contrast, are those who think only of themselves. Their lack of interest in the misery and suffering of others shows their lack of love for Jesus. They know nothing of his character and have never learnt to deny themselves for his sake. There is no place for them in Jesus' kingdom; their punishment is certain (Matthew 25:41-46). As in the stories of the ten girls and the three employees, people are condemned for their failure to do good rather than any deliberate wrongdoing.

## **Suggested Lesson Outline**

### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song "I Love To Tell the Story" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 309

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

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

I love to tell the story for those who know it best  
Seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest.  
And when I sing in glory, I knew the new, new song  
Will be the old, old story that I have loved so long.  
I love to tell the story and when I am in glory,  
I'll tell the old,old story of Jesus' endless love.

Opening Prayer (Ask a participant to start the class with a prayer)

## Learning Time

### *Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Divide the class into two groups. Assign each group a biblical text and let each group discuss the questions assigned to them.

#### *Group A- Exodus 3:1-15*

- What is the story all about?
- What do you think is the core theme of the text?
- What affirmations of faith can you draw out from the story/text?
- What church doctrine or belief conveys the same affirmations you find in the text?

#### *Group B- Matthew 25:31-46*

- What is the context of the parable as presented in the text?
- What do you think is the core theme of the parable?
- What affirmations of faith can you draw out from the parable?
- What church doctrine or belief conveys the same affirmations you find in the parable/text?

### *Lessons Learned*

The teacher may print out copies of the Niceness Creed, Apostles Creed and the UCCP Statement of Faith. Or, the teacher may decide to use again the groupings, assign each group a creed and the UCCP Statement of Faith. Tell each group to compare the two affirmations of faith and take note of their similarities and differences.

---

Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines

We believe, in One God; Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer who provides order, purpose, meaning and fulfillment to all creation. That in Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary, God became human and is Sovereign Lord of life and history. That in the Holy Spirit, God is present in the world, empowering and guiding believers to understand and live out their faith in Jesus Christ.

We believe, persons are created in the image of God and destined to live in community with God, with other persons and with all creation. That by disobedience, they have become sinful, but, by grace through faith, they are redeemed in Jesus Christ. That being entrusted with God's creation, they are called to participate in the establishment of a just and compassionate social order.

We believe, that the Church is the one Body of Christ, the whole community of persons reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and entrusted with God's ministry.

We believe, that the Holy Bible is a faithful and inspired witness of God's self revelation in Jesus Christ and in history, to illumine, guide correct and edify believers in their faith and witness.

We believe, that God is at work to make each person a new being in Christ and the whole world God's Kingdom in which love, justice and peace prevail. That the Kingdom of God is present where faith in Jesus Christ is shared, where healing is given to the sick, where food is given to the hungry, where light is given to the blind, and where liberty is given to the captive and oppressed.

We believe, that the resurrection of Jesus Christ has overcome the power of death gives assurance of life after death, and we look forward to His coming again in all fullness and glory to make all creation new and to gather all the faithful in the Kingdom of God. Amen.

(Revised in 1992 by the UCCP Faith and Order Committee and approved by 2006 Quadrennial General Assembly Digos, Davao del Sur)

---

#### Apostles' Creed\*

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended to the dead. On the third day He rose again; He ascended into heaven, He is seated at the right hand of the God and He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy

Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints: the forgiveness of sins: the Resurrection of the body: and the life everlasting. Amen

\*From the New Century Hymnal, United Church of Christ in the United States of America, The Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, Ohio, 1995.

---

### Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God; eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God; begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through Him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

---

Let each group present the result of their comparison. Ask the learners:

What is the significance of these Christian Creeds to our affirmation of faith as UCCP?

#### *Applying the Lessons Learned*

- a. How would you react to comments that the UCCP set of beliefs are not biblically grounded?
- b. How would you defend our faith affirmations as UCCP?

## Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Song “Why We Are UCCP” Hymnal of Faith Journey,

We believe in One God; Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer of everyone’s life;  
In Jesus Christ God became man and rules as Lord of all,  
In Spirit God guides us all along.

Chorus: That’s why we are UCCP, it taught us just what the Lord had said;  
To live a life in community with God and all;  
Assured of life even after death, no more sorrow and no more  
defeat, There’s only love, justice and peace all creation new.  
There’s only love, justice and peace, UCCP!

Closing Prayer (request an elder or the pastor to close the session with a  
prayer)

### *Lesson 19: What doctrines and beliefs are embodied in the Statement of Faith?*

PEACE Sunday/ NCWA Sunday

Eighth Sunday in Kingdomtide

October 11, 2020

**General Concept:** The doctrines and beliefs of the UCCP are embodied in the UCCP Statement of Faith: one God, persons, bible, church, kingdom of God, and resurrection.

**Biblical References:** Psalm 119:33-40; Genesis 1:26-27;

### Age Level Concepts

- The doctrines and beliefs of the UCCP are embodied in the UCCP Statement of Faith: one God, persons, bible, church, kingdom of God, and resurrection
- We base our mission expressions on our Statement of Faith
- We adhere and live out the doctrines and beliefs of our church expressed in the Statement of Faith

### Learning Objectives

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

- Mention the doctrines of the church embodied in its Statement of Faith
- Identify the mission expressions of the church that are based on the Statement of Faith
- Affirm to live out the doctrines of the church as expressed in its Statement of Faith.

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

## **Biblical Background**

Genesis 1:26-28

Being made in God's image, human beings are unique in God's creation. Somehow they are like God in a way that nothing else is. This does not mean simply that certain 'parts' of human beings such as their spiritual, moral or mental capacities reflect the divine nature. The whole person is in God's image. Because of this expression of God within them, men and women are in a sense God's representatives upon earth. He has appointed them rulers over the earthly creation (see 1:27-28).

Without the image of God within them, people would not (according to the biblical definition) be human. Even if they had the physical appearance of human beings, they would be no more than creatures of the animal world.

An animal's 'animality' is in itself; a person's humanity is not. It depends for its existence upon God. That is why human beings, in spite of the dignity and status given them by God, cannot exist independently of God. They may want to, and may bring disaster upon themselves as a result (as seen in the story of their original disobedience; see notes on 2:8-17, 3:1-24 below), but they cannot destroy the image of God. The image of God within them is what makes them human.

Psalm 119: 17-32

*Verses 17-32:* The psalmist knows that if he has this desire to be guided by God's word, his life will be full of purpose and meaning. Though he may be unsure of his future (17-20), mocked by friends (21-22), or persecuted by rulers (23), he will always be loyal to God's word (24). This gives him the confidence to trust in God when he is in distress. God's word strengthens him (25-28). He therefore prays for increased understanding and greater inner strength to refuse what is evil and choose what is good (29-32).

1 Corinthians 1: 10-17

Paul urges the Corinthian Christians to stop their quarrellings and be united (10). He has heard from people from Chloe's household that the Christians have divided themselves into factions. Some called themselves Paul's party. Others, who were impressed with the preaching of Apollos (cf. [Acts 18:24-28](#)), formed the Apollos party. Perhaps it was the Jewish group who claimed to be followers of Peter; while a fourth group claimed even higher leadership than that of Paul, Apollos or Peter, by calling themselves Christ's special party (11-12).

With a few ironical questions, Paul rebukes all the parties. He is thankful that he baptized only a few people in Corinth, namely, Crispus, Gaius and the household of Stephanus (cf. [Acts 18:8](#); [Romans 16:23](#); [1 Corinthians 16:15](#); [1 Corinthians 16:17](#)). No one can now accuse him of baptizing people with the aim of gaining a personal following. Nor did he make any attempt to attract followers by displaying much

wisdom or ability in his preaching. His sole aim was to preach the gospel of Christ crucified, so that people might be saved (13-17)

## **Suggested Lesson Outline**

### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/ or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song “Hymn of Our Faith Journey” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 1  
*The Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer is the Great Triune God of our lives,  
All creation finds purpose and meaning and fulfillment in God’s wondrous  
plan;*

*In Christ God became flesh to dwell among us, through the Spirit we’re  
guided along.*

*God empowers us all to live out our faith, to the glory of the Triune God.*

*We’re created to be in God’s image, men and women in equality,*

*God anointed us all for the service, and be stewards of all God’s great  
works.*

*To live in communion with all creation, and establish a just social life.*

*God created the world for us to enjoy, all the blessings that tell of God’s  
love.*

Opening Prayer (Ask someone from among the participants to start the class  
with a prayer)

### **Learning Time**

*Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Divide the learners into three groups. Assign each group a biblical text and  
tell them to answer the questions assigned them.

Group 1- Genesis 1: 26-28

- What is the core theme of the text?
- How does the discussion of being human connects with the discussion about God?
- How should human beings relate to other creatures?

Group 2 - Psalm 119: 17-32

- What is the core theme of this text?
- How does God’s words impact the life of the Psalmist?

Group 3- 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

- What is the core theme of this text?
- What causes the division in the church of Corinth?

- According to Paul, what should be the basis to achieve unity in the church?

Let each group share the gist of their discussions and responses to the questions raised.

#### *Lessons Learned*

The facilitator may refer the groups' responses to the UCCP Statement of Faith by asking the following:

- What particular belief of the UCCP can we relate our responses to?
- If our mission expressions as a church are embodied in our Statement of Faith, mention these mission expressions that our local church is presently and actively engaged in.

#### *Applying the Lessons Learned*

**Statement of Affirmation.** Let the learners finish the statement. Encourage everyone to do this activity.

"I commit myself to live out the beliefs of UCCP as expressed in its Statement of Faith by \_\_\_\_\_"

### **Closing Worship**

Offering

Closing Song "Hymn of our Faith Journey" Hymnal of Faith, 1

*God's inspired instrument to instruct us is the Bible, the great Word of God;  
To illumine, to guide and correct us and to brighten our pathway to heaven.  
God is working to make us new beings in Christ, and the whole world God's  
kingdom to be,  
Where God's presence is felt, the hungry are fed, the oppressed and the  
captives are freed.*

*We have triumphed over death with our Savior, Jesus Christ is our own  
risen Lord,*

*He will gather us all in his fullness, to inherit the Kingdom of God.*

*He has given the gift of eternal life, so that all who believed may be saved,*

*We all look forward to his coming again, to gather us all in his fold.*

Closing Prayer (Request the Pastor to end the session with a prayer)

***Lesson 20: What are the fundamental values that are at the heart of our witness to the world and our service to the church?***

**UCM Sunday/ Indigenous People's  
Sunday**

Ninth Sunday in Kingdomtide

October 18, 2020



**General Concept:** *The fundamental values of love, justice, truth and compassion are essential to our witness to the world and service to the church.*

**Biblical References:** Psalm 103: 1-7, 8-13; Micah 6:8; *Matthew 15:32;*

### **Age Level Concepts**

- *The fundamental values of love, justice, truth and compassion are essential to our witness to the world and service to the Church*
- We live out love, justice, truth and compassion in our witness to the world and service to the Church

### **Learning Objectives**

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

- Articulate the fundamental values essential to our witness to the world.
- Identify models of witness or service wherein such values are expressed.
- Affirm to live out love, justice, truth, and compassion in our service to the church and to the world.

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

### **Biblical Background**

Psalm 103:1-8.

Realizing how easily people forget God, David reminds himself of the many blessings, physical and spiritual, that God has given him. Gratefully, he praises God for them all (1-2). Sin, sickness and the prospect of a hopeless death have been replaced by forgiveness, good health and a renewed enjoyment of life (3-5).

The constant love of God for his people is seen in the history of Israel. He cares for the oppressed and shows mercy on sinners (6-8). If God acted only according to his justice, all sinners would perish. But to his justice he adds his mercy, by which sinners may be forgiven (9-12). God understands human weakness and he is kind to those who fear him (13-14).

Micah 6:8

Returning to conditions in his own time, Micah pictures a courtroom where, with the heavens and earth as witnesses, God accuses his people of unfaithfulness (6:1-2). God recalls the great things he has done for them, as if asking why they treat him so badly in return (3-5).

The people's reply shows their misunderstanding. They ask what sort of worship God wants. Does he want sacrifices that are exact according to the letter of the law? Or an

increase in the number of sacrifices? Or more lavish sacrifices? Or even heathen sacrifices? If God tells them what he wants, they will try to please him (6-7).

God replies that he has already shown them (particularly through Amos, Hosea and Isaiah) what he wants, namely, justice and love towards their fellow human beings, and faithfulness and humility towards God. Correct sacrifices and enthusiastic religious exercises are of no value if the people do not have right attitudes and right conduct (8).

Matthew 15:32

Again Jesus had compassion when he saw a multitude of hungry people around him and he decided to feed them. On the previous occasion the crowd consisted largely of Jews (see [John 6:14-15](#)), but on this occasion it probably consisted largely of Gentiles. That may have been why the disciples doubted whether Jesus would use his power to feed them ([Matthew 15:32-33](#); [Mark 8:1-4](#)). But he fed them as miraculously as he had the Jews ([Matthew 15:34-39](#); [Mark 8:5-10](#)).

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song "Lead On Eternal Sovereign" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 366

Lead on eternal Sovereign, we follow in your way;  
Loud rings your cry for justice, your call for peace this day,  
Through prayerful preparation, your grace will make us strong,  
To carry on the struggle to triumph over wrong.

Lead on eternal Sovereign, we follow not with fear,  
For in each human conflict your words of strength we hear;  
That when we serve with gladness, you will not let us fall;  
Our trust is in your promise that love will conquer all.

Opening Prayer ( Ask one of the learners to start the session with a prayer)

#### **Learning Time**

*Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group a biblical text and tell them to answer the questions assigned them:

Group 1 - Psalm 103:1-8

- What does David try to remind himself of?
- What were the blessings that David was thankful for?
- How did the people experience God's love?
- How would you define love based on how God demonstrated it?

Group 2 - Micah 6:8; Amos 5:24

- What are considered good that human beings should do?
- What does it imply when something is required by God?
- How would you define justice based on the texts?

Matthew 15:32

- What was the situation that prompted Jesus to tell the disciples to find food?
- Why do you think Jesus is always moved whenever he see a huge crowd following him?
- How would you define compassion based on the story?

Let each group share their responses to the questions assigned to them.

### *Lessons Learned*

After the sharing, emphasize that these values were demonstrated by God since the beginning of creation even up to Jesus' time. Jesus' life and works clearly demonstrate God's love, compassion, truth and justice.

As followers of Jesus Christ, and being the body of Christ in the world, these values are supposed to be demonstrated in our witness and service to the world and the church.

Tell the learners to mention programs of the local church that clearly demonstrate the values of love, compassion, truth and justice.

### PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

LOVE	TRUTH	COMPASSION	JUSTICE

### *Applying the Lessons Learned*

Ask the learners:

- How would you live out the values of love, justice, truth and compassion in your daily lives - with your family, friends?
- How would you live out the values of love, justice, truth and compassion to the people in the community- your neighbors?
- How would you live out the values of love, justice, truth and compassion to the world?

### **Closing Worship**

Offering

Closing Song "Great Is Your Faithfulness" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 49

Great is your faithfulness, O God Creator,  
 With you no shadow of turning we see,  
 You do not change, your compassion they fail not,  
 All of your goodness forever will be.

Chorus: Great is your faithfulness, great is Your faithfulness,  
 Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
 All I have needed your hands has provided,  
 Great is your faithfulness, God unto me.

Closing Prayer (The facilitator may end the session with a prayer)

*Lesson 21: What do we mean by "love" in relation to our witness to the world and service to the Church?*

Reformation Sunday

Tenth Sunday in Kingdomtide

October 25, 2020

**General Concept:** *Love means selfless giving of oneself to the task of witnessing to the world and service to the Church.*

**Biblical References:** Jonah 4:9-11; John. 21:15-17

### **Age Level Concepts**

- Love means selfless giving of oneself to the task of witnessing to the world and service to the Church
- Our church expresses love selflessly through the life-work and ministries of the Church
- We demonstrate our love when we participate participate in witnessing and service to the world and the Church

### **Learning Objectives**

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

- Articulate their understanding of “love” in relation to witnessing and service to the world and the Church.
- Mention models of loving selflessly within the context of the local church and immediate community
- Suggest ways of expressing love in relation to witnessing and service to the world and the church.

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

### **Biblical Background**

Jonah 4:9-11

It now became clear why Jonah did not want to preach in Nineveh. He wanted the Ninevites to be destroyed, not spared; he wanted them to be punished, not forgiven. He knew that God was merciful to sinners, but he wanted this divine blessing reserved solely for the people of Israel. He would rather die than see Gentiles forgiven the same as Israelites (4:1-3).

God wanted to make Jonah see that he had no right to be angry, but Jonah refused to listen. Apparently still hoping that God would change his mind and destroy Nineveh, he went outside the city, built himself a temporary shelter, and waited to see what would happen at the end of the forty days (4-5).

Since Jonah had not responded to God's earlier rebuke, God now gave him an object lesson in sympathy. When Jonah's shelter proved inadequate to protect him from the heat of the sun, God made a big leafy plant grow up to provide Jonah with shade. As a result Jonah felt thankful. Then God made the plant die, and exposed Jonah to the blazing sun and a burning wind. As a result Jonah became angry (6-8).

Jonah did not want the plant to die, and neither did God want the people of Nineveh to die. Jonah felt sorry for a plant that he had not made and that lasted only one day. How much more should God feel sorry for the people of Nineveh whom he had made and who, in their ignorance, had faced total destruction (9-11). (Bridgeway Bible Commentary)

Clearly, Jonah is not a good model of service to God and faithful witnessing to the people. He was too concerned of what he thinks and feels about the people in Nineveh. But through his encounter with God, Jonah was made to understand how great God's love was for the people. As God's servant, called to deliver God's message, Jonah must obey God first and set aside his selfish concerns to the point of giving oneself for God's purpose.

John 21: 15-17

Peter had once boasted that he loved Jesus more than the other disciples did, and that although they might fail him, he would not (see [Mark 14:29](#)). Yet three times he publicly disowned Jesus. Three times, therefore, he was asked publicly if he loved Jesus, as a reminder to him of the danger of over-confidence. Jesus' public conversation with Peter also showed the others that he had forgiven him. More than that he gave Peter the responsibility to care for his people through the difficult days of the church's beginning (cf. [Luke 22:31-32](#)). As a leader in that early group, receiving the full force of Jewish persecution, Peter would need more love for Jesus than the others ([John 21:15-17](#)).

If Peter was to follow Jesus, he would no longer be free to live the independent life of an energetic young fisherman. His life would be one of constant sacrifice and hard work in caring for Jesus' people. In the end he would be captured and killed on account of his loyalty to Jesus ([John 21:18-19](#); [John 13:36](#)).

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and /or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song            “Life of the World” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 240

Life of the world and God’s beloved Son  
Jesus the Christ, in whom we are all one;  
One body we, one spirit and one call,  
One mighty God above and in us all.

Behold Your people in these desperate days,  
Suff’ring from war and want and sins decay,  
Call us from death to your eternal life,  
Grant us thy peace and end this night of strife.

Opening Prayer ( Request someone from the class to start the session with a prayer)

#### **Learning Time**

*Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Divide the class into two groups. assign each group a biblical text to study.

Group A - Jonah 4:9-11

- What was God’s purpose for calling Jonah?
- What were Jonah’s personal reasons for refusing God’s call?
- How did God make Jonah understand God’s intention for the people?
- What was asked from Jonah to be able to perform his task?

- How would you define “love” based on this context?

Group B - John 21: 15-17

- How would you describe Peter based on this conversation with Jesus?
- What were asked from Peter as a way to show his love to Jesus?
- How would you define “love” in relation to “feeding the lambs”?
- How would you define “love” in relation to “tending the sheep”?
- How would you define “love” in relation to “feeding the sheep”?

*Lessons Learned*

***Sharing of Experiences.***

- Encourage the learners to share their own experience wherein they put others’ concern and welfare first before their own.
- Encourage the learners to share of people in the church or community who exemplified a selfless life of witness and service in the church and community.
- Mention programs or ministries of the local church that lived out the kind of love that Jesus exemplified.

*Applying the Lessons Learned*

Jesus exemplified a kind of love that selflessly gives one’s life for others. As Jesus followers, *what are the ways we can do to live out such kind of love in our witnessing and service to the world and the Church?*

**Closing Worship**

Offering

Closing Song           ”Life of the World” (3rd and 4th stanza)

We are your hands to lift up people’s load,  
We are your feet on paths where sufferings goad,  
We are your voice to witness to the Word,  
We are your church, your gift of love unfurled.

Life of the world, bestowed by God above,  
Flow through our lives in loyalty and love,  
Make known your grace to every needy one,  
Your kingdom come, your holy will be done.

Closing Prayer (The facilitator may close the session with a prayer)

*Lesson 22: What do we mean by “justice” in relation to our witness to the world and service to the Church?*

Church Workers Sunday/ All Saints Day

Eleventh Sunday in Kingdomtide

November 01, 2020

**General Concept:** *Justice means rendering to everyone what is due and what is right according to the righteousness of God*

**Biblical References:** 2 Chronicles 19:6-10; Amos 5:21-24; Luke 18:1-8

**Age Level Concepts**

- Justice means rendering to everyone what is due and what is right according to the righteousness of God
- We participate in the work for justice by taking the side of the powerless and victims of injustices

**Learning Objectives**

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

- Articulate their understanding of the word “justice” in relation to our witnessing to the world and service to the Church
- Discuss what is just and right to concrete situations of people today
- Suggest strategies and/or programs wherein the Church as a whole can effectively participate in the work for justice.

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

**Biblical Background**

2 Chronicles 19:6-10

Jehoshaphat reformed and reorganized Judah's judicial system to eliminate injustice, guarantee fair treatment for all, and ensure that standard procedures were followed throughout the land. He set up courts and appointed judges in all the chief cities of Judah, with the main court and the chief judges in Jerusalem. The courts and the officials were divided into two kinds. Some dealt with religious matters and were under the control of the chief priest. Others dealt with civil matters and were under the control of the chief governor (4-11). This arrangement was a further indication to the Chronicler that David's dynasty governed according to the Levitical code (cf. Deuteronomy 16:18-20; Deuteronomy 17:8-12).

Amos 5:21-24

God's terrible judgment will result in grief and mourning throughout the nation, in city and country areas alike (16-17). This intervention of God in judgment is commonly called the day of the Lord. Israelites thought that this day would be one of victory and



rejoicing for them because their enemies would be destroyed. Amos tells them that when God acts in judgment, God will act against all the wicked, and Israel will be the first to suffer. There will be no way of escape, no place of safety, when God's judgment falls (18-20).

Amos repeats that the remedy for the people's troubles is not to increase their religious rituals and ceremonies, but to change their conduct. Feasts and sacrifices are of value only when the offerers are doing God's will in their daily lives. They must behave with justice and uprightness towards their fellows if their religious exercises are to be acceptable to God (21-24).

Luke 18:1-8

Because there may be an apparent delay before his return, Jesus told a parable to encourage his disciples. They may suffer injustice from opponents of the gospel, but they must persevere in prayer, confident that God will hear them (Luke 18:1). If an ungodly judge will give a just judgment to a helpless widow solely to be rid of her ceaseless pleading, how much more will the holy God answer the cries of the persecuted people. The world may be unbelieving, but the disciples of Jesus must maintain their faith to the end (Luke 18:2-8). (The Bridgeway Bible Commentary)

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song “Mahimo Ba ang Alawiton” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 368  
(How Can Our Song This Time Be Chanted)

Cebuano: Mahimo ba ang alawiton ning panahon sa kalisdanan,  
Way panag-angay sa katawhan, barato ang kinabuhi  
Katumbas lang sa sapi.

Refrain: Buksan na ang kalangitan, ipaulan ang mga damgo ta  
Pahayaga ang paglaum, O Ginoo,  
Ayaw kawanga ning pagtuo.

English: How can our song this time be chanted  
Living is yoked with heavy burdens  
Some are not mindful of each other  
And life can be bought with money  
How cheap it is! Can it be!

Refrain:

Open wide, O God, the heavens  
And let our dreams come like falling rain  
Let our hopes be ever brighter,

Loving Savior, let not our faith forsake nor fail us.

Opening Prayer (Ask someone from the learners to start the session with a prayer)

### Learning Time

#### *Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Assign three people to read the biblical texts. Discuss briefly the background of the biblical texts. Raise the following questions for the learners to answer:

	2Chronicles 19:6-10	Amos 5:21-24	Luke 18:1-8
How would you describe the situation of the people?			
What is God's concern for the people?			
How is "justice" defined in the text?			
What is God's will in terms of giving fairness or justice?			

#### *Lessons Learned*

Consolidate the responses of the learners based on the biblical text. Present the concept of "Justice" as *rendering to everyone what is due and what is right according to the righteousness of God.*

Based on this understanding of "justice", ask the learners to point out what is just and rightful due to the following sectors of people :

- Farmers
- Fisherfolk
- Factory Workers
- Students/young people
- Health workers
- Indigenous people
- Teachers
- children
- Urban poor
- Church Workers

- Who should be on their side to help them get what is due them?
- What is our church doing to help them get what is due them?

*Applying the Lessons Learned*

Distribute pieces of paper to the learners. Tell them to write on the paper their suggestions as to how the Church or their local church can participate in the work for justice as an expression of our witnessing and service to the world and church.

Place their papers in the box. the facilitator may pick out randomly papers and read the responses written on it.

**Closing Worship**

Offering

Closing Song "Mahimo Ba Ang Alawiton" (2nd stanza)

Cebuano: Samtang gigutom kadaghanan ug giuhaw sa katarungan  
Naghingapin sa adunahan, pagkaon ug ang hudyaka,  
Nag sobrang kadagaya.

Refrain:

Buksan na ang kalangitan, ipaulan ang mga damgo ta  
Pahayaga ang paglaum, O Ginoo,  
Ayaw kawanga ning pagtuo.

English: Many are hungry all around us,  
Thirsty as well for truth and justice,  
While all the rich have more than plenty,  
They wallow in pleasure always,  
Their lives are all so easy.

Refrain:

Open wide, O God, the heavens  
And let our dreams come like falling rain  
Let our hopes be ever brighter,  
Loving Savior, let not our faith forsake nor fail us.

Closing Prayer (the facilitator or Pastor may be asked to end the session with a prayer)

**Lesson 23: What do we mean by "truth" in relation to our witness to the world and service to the Church?**

Theological Education Sunday

Twelfth Sunday in Kingdomtide

November 08, 2020

**General Concept:** Truth is the revealed will of God through Jesus Christ.

**Biblical References:** John 14:6; Acts 5:1-11

### **Age Level Concepts**

- Truth is the revealed will of God through Jesus Christ.
- The UCCP strongly adheres and stands for the truth
- We speak and stand for the truth as we witness and render service to the world and to the Church

### **Learning Objectives**

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

- Explain their own understanding of “truth” in relation to our witnessing and rendering service to the worlds and to the Church.
- Study examples of how the Church stands for truth as part of its witness and service.
- Affirm the UCCP stand, statements and resolutions on issues and concerns that affect the lives of the people

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

### **Biblical Background**

John 14:6

In this passage, Jesus’ character was portrayed as the “truth”. It was the very word of Jesus, as a way of introducing himself. Jesus was, is, and will be the truth. This is his eternal character and it will never be changed, for this is the very nature of God. Since Jesus is God who became human, therefore, Jesus is truth. In Jesus, truth is perfectly expressed and fulfilled. The truth about the very nature of God was revealed and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. If God, in Jesus Christ, truth is revealed, expressed, and fulfilled, it follows that those who believe in him and who come to know him come to know the truth.

The life and ministry of Jesus were all directed towards the revelation of the true God and towards the fulfillment of God’s purpose for the whole of creation. If we believe that Jesus is the truth, our ways, thoughts, and values would also manifest the truth about Jesus. We have to emulate the character of Jesus as the only and eternal truth. Our life should live out the truth revealed and fulfilled through and in Jesus Christ. The truth shall set us free.

Acts 5: 1-11

The passage is about the story of a couple named Ananias and Sapphira. Like Barnabas, they also sell their property, as it was the practice of the early church, and the money will be distributed to the poor and needy in the community. But unlike Barnabas, who had given all the money to the apostles, Ananias brought just a portion of the money. The problem was not the money, but the couple “kept” back part

of the money. The Greek word for “kept” can also mean “stole”. Before they sold the property, the community agreed to give all the money but the couple “kept or stole” part of it. But they have not only stolen the money, but they had also lied. Although it is their option to sell their property and nobody forced them to sell it, they need not lie. According to the passage Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some money you received for the land?... You have not lied just to human beings but to God.” And when Ananias heard this, he fell and died. The people were terrified about what happened. After three hours, when his wife Sapphira came without the knowledge of the happening, she was asked by Peter about the money they got from the land, and she also lied. Sapphira conspired and lied against the Holy Spirit and at that very moment, she fell and died. Great fear filled the whole church and those who heard about the story. The lesson in the story is clear: Lying is against the Holy Spirit/God that gains fearful outcome. Lying is not just against human beings but God.

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Announcement and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song “I Love to Tell the Story” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 309

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

Refrain:

I love to tell the story and when I am in glory,  
I’ll tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

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

Opening Prayer ( Ask from among the learners to start the session with a prayer)

#### **Learning Time**

*Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Divide the learners into two groups. assign to each group a biblical text and tell them to respond to the questions assigned them.

Group 1 - John 14:6

- What does Jesus mean when he said, “I am the Truth”?

- How can we connect Jesus being “the Truth” to our understanding of God?
- What truth can we associate with Jesus?

Group 2 - Acts 5:1-11

- What was the biggest mistake committed by the couple against the church or the apostles?
- Why was the choice of the couple of not giving the whole proceeds to the church or the apostle be considered sinful if it is their property they are selling?
- Why should God be angry to the couple if they have committed the mistake only against the apostles and church?

Have the groups share their responses to the questions. Based on their sharing, ask the learners:

- a. How do we understand “truth” based on our readings from the Bible?
- b. What kind of “truth” should the church speak of and stand for?
- c. What would be the consequences when one speaks the truth or not?

*Lessons Learned*

Distribute statements made by the Church on issues that affects the life of the people.

Ask them to identify the truth that the Church tries to speak of and stand for.

---

A STATEMENT ON MARTIAL LAW AND EXPRESSION OF CONCERN ON RELATED ISSUES General Assembly 20 May 1974

We, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, responding to what we believe is God's will for us these days, solemnly pledge to do our best in the building of a new society:

1. By challenging all to a life of faith and holiness, beginning with those who are within the fellowship of the Church;
2. By giving unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, unto God the things that are God's;
3. By praying for those who are in authority, that they may be instruments of God in preserving peace and order, promoting righteousness and justice, securing equality and opportunity for all, and safeguarding the worth and dignity of human persons;
4. By seeking the truth which makes men free and working for freedom that makes men whole;
5. By witnessing to the liberating power of the Gospel which sets free both the oppressed and the oppressor;

6. By opposing abuses and corruption in the church and in the government;
7. By gearing and girding our educational programs to help meet the pressing needs of our people;
8. By engaging in various forms of Christian service to those detained but not charged in court, to prisoners in need of spiritual comfort and pastoral care, to farm and industrial workers seeking just wages and better conditions of living, to the poor and the underprivileged who need to feel the touch of the Master's love;
9. By upholding the due processes of democracy in church and society;
10. By nurturing church members into a more aggressive and dynamic discipleship that will dispel the atmosphere of fear, knowing that God has given us the spirit of love and not of fear;
11. By being prophetic in preaching, serving, and witnessing and being true to the mandates of our Lord;
12. By offering ourselves as a reconciling agent to heal broken relationships and foster understanding, trust, and brotherhood.

In the context of this total concern, we address ourselves to some specific issues which affect the entire Filipino nation:

1. Announcement has been made that there might be another referendum within a month or two. Whenever it may be and whatever the issues are, we request the President that he reassures us that there is freedom of speech so that voters can discuss the issues intelligently. Our people should be encouraged to speak out their minds candidly. Furthermore, to help give maximum assurance to our people that fairness and freedom are truly respected, we suggest to the President that the conduct of the coining referendum be entrusted to an independent body composed of citizens whose integrity is beyond reproach, such as the retired justices of the Supreme Court.

2. We are alarmed by the rapid growth of multinational corporations in the Philippines. We are particularly concerned about the adverse effect of the Philippine-Japan Treaty of Commerce and Navigation. We therefore call on the appropriate authorities and knowledgeable citizens to be most vigilant and to share their thinking as widely as possible, so that the people can participate in making decisions that affect their livelihood and their future.

3. Under the regime of Martial Law, the military has a big hand in the carrying out of government programs. We pray that they will have the strength equal to the task. We are deeply concerned by the fact that many of those being detained have not been charged in court. We appeal for a more speedy dispensation of justice. Furthermore, we express disapproval of any maltreatment of citizens, believing that every individual, however lowly and humble he may be, is a child of the Heavenly Father.

Ref: General Assembly, May 20, 1974, Appendix XVI pp. 152-153.

## PEACEMAKING: OUR MINISTRY Council of Bishops 21 August 1986

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

Isaiah 32:16-17

### ALL-ENCOMPASSING MEANING

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

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

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

### THREATS TO PEACE

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

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

### MILITARIZATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDES

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

### REAL THREAT TO PEACE: STRUCTURES OF INJUSTICE

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

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



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

#### OUR MINISTRY OF PEACEMAKING

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

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

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

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

---

#### *Applying the Lessons Learned*

Our church, the UCCP has been red-tagged by the state for speaking against the ills of society that caused suffering and oppression to majority of the people especially the poor and the under served.

How do we as members of the church support and affirm the stand of our church for truth?

#### **Closing Worship**

Offering

Closing Song            “We’ve A Story To Tell to the Nations”

Hymnal of Faith Journey, 310

We’ve a story to tell to the nations that shall turn their hearts to the right,

A story of truth and mercy, a story of peace and light

A story of peace and light.

Refrain:

For the darkness shall turn to dawning, and the dawning to noon day bright,

And Christ’s great kingdom shall come to earth, the Kingdom of love and

light.

Closing Prayer (The facilitator may end the session with a prayer)

**Lesson 24: What do we mean by “compassion” in relation to our witness to the world and service to the Church?**

Ecumenical Witness Sunday

Thirteenth Sunday in Kingdomtide

November 15, 2020

**General Concept:** Compassion means deep sense of empathy and commitment to eradicate the causes of suffering to experience the fullness of life in Christ.

**Biblical References:** Matthew 9:36; Psalm 23:1

**Age Level Concepts**

- Compassion means deep sense of empathy and commitment to eradicate the causes of suffering to experience the fullness of life in Christ.
- The UCCP demonstrates compassion to all people through its witness to the world and service to the Church.
- We exemplify Christ’s compassion to the world.

**Learning Objectives**

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

- Explain the true essence of compassion as exemplified by Jesus Christ.
- Analyze how church ministries embodied Christ’s compassion in the face of an oppressive society.
- Propose means by which members of the church will realize that compassion and witness are always linked to each other.

**Materials:** Bible, offering plate or basket, Hymnal or song books, pictures of the different life conditions of the people

**Biblical Background**

Mathew 9:36 “When he saw the crowds he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like a sheep without a shepherd.”

One of the marks of a true disciple of Jesus Christ is compassion. The passage zooms in on Jesus. Jesus saw the circumstance of the people. The passage describes the people as harassed and helpless. This short description of the people’s circumstance sets the backdrop for Jesus’ ministry of proclaiming God’s Kingdom thru his teaching, preaching and healing ministry and as well as the training of the twelve disciples for the ministry of witnessing. Note that after Jesus felt compassion for the people he turned to the disciples and said, “The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few.” To those who follow Christ, exemplifying Christ’s compassion for the suffering and harassed people is not an option but an obligation. Manifesting compassion is an imperative of the Christian faith.

Psalm 23:1 “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”

The image of a shepherd has always been used to describe God’s relationship with Israel. The Hebrew word for shepherd is *ro’i*. This Hebrew word may have been derived from *re’a* which means friend. This connotes that a shepherd should have a close and a friendly relationship with the sheep. The word *ro’i* may be translated as shepherd but it could also be translated as seeing or gazing. Thus when we say “The Lord is my shepherd” we are actually affirming our belief that we need not be afraid because God is our shepherd and God sees the needs of the people or flock. Take note that in Matthew 9:36 Jesus saw that people’s affliction and this ignited in him the sense of compassion. Compassion cannot be ignited without seeing or being aware of real happenings. We have a God who is a shepherd. We have a God who sees our circumstances. We have a God who provides. We have a God who is compassionate. If we claim to be an image of God then compassion is an obligation and not an option.

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Opening Hymn      ”Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us”

Hymnal of Faith Journey, 207

Savior, like a shepherd lead us, much we need your tender care,  
In your pleasant pastures feed us, for our use your folds prepare.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have bought us, Yours we are,  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have bought us, Yours we are.

We are yours, in love befriend us, be the guardian of our way,  
Keep your flock from sin defend us, seek us when we go astray.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear your children when we pray,  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear your children when we pray.

Opening Prayer ( Ask an elder to start the session with a prayer)

#### **Learning Time**

*Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Read the two biblical texts

Guide questions for discussion

- Describe the people’s situation and Jesus’ reaction to their condition. What are the possible causes of such circumstance?
  
- What is compassion?
- ✓ The dictionary defines compassion as a sympathetic consciousness of others’ distress together with the desire to alleviate it.

- ✓ Compassion requires a person to do something to help others in distress. This is what makes compassion different from pity. Compassion is not just a feeling.
- Based on Matthew 9:37-38, what was the challenge of Jesus to the disciples?
  - ✓ Compassion is not just a feeling or an emotion. Compassion is a call to action. Thus Jesus challenged the disciples to become laborers in the vineyard. But they must be workers with both a passion for the task of proclaiming God's Kingdom and a compassion for the plight of the people.

### **Lessons Learned**

#### Picture Study.

- a. Show at least 3 to 5 pictures that depict the difficult conditions of the people.
- b. Request the participants to look at the pictures in silence.
- c. After looking at the pictures in silence sing together the song "Do You Really Care?"

#### "Do You Really Care?"

I look around in the place that I live I see people with so much to give  
Yet there are those who are dying to know just that somebody cares

Do you really care? Do you know how to share,  
With people everywhere? Do you really care?  
Will you take the dare, spread good news everywhere?  
The cross of Christ to bear, do you really care?

I see people just longing to know what they can live for and where they can go

We have the hope, and the purpose to share, But do we really care?

#### Ask the following questions:

1. Based on the song and on the pictures we saw what is our assessment on our level and kind of compassion as an individual, as a church and as a community?
2. What do you think would be God's reaction or evaluation on our actions especially that we claim to be Christ's follower and an image of God?
3. Identify ministries of the church that show that we are really compassionate workers in the kingdom of God. Is this enough?

*Applying the Lessons Learned*

- Let each one share what one simple act of compassion they can do at home in the coming week. (Review this on the following Sunday to know if they have fulfilled their commitment.
- On a piece of paper let the participants write what the church can do further to really exemplify Christ's compassion. Give the participants' output to the elders for further discussion and planning and present to the Church Council.

**Closing Worship**

Closing Hymn "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

Love Divine, all love excelling, Joy of heav'n, to earth come down;  
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling, All Thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, Thou art all compassion; Pure, unbounded love Thou art;  
Visit us with Thy salvation, Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit Into every troubled breast;  
Let us all in Thee inherit, Let us find the promised rest.  
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;  
End of faith, as its beginning, Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty, to deliver, Let us all Thy life receive;  
May Thy presence e'er be with us, Never more Thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing, Serve Thee as Thou wouldst  
approve,  
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing, Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish, then, Thy new creation; Pure and spotless let us be;  
Let us see Thy great salvation Perfectly restored in Thee;  
Changed from glory into glory Till with Thee we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before Thee, Lost in wonder, love and  
praise.

Closing Prayer ( The facilitator may close the session with a prayer)

**Lesson 25: Why is there a need for equitable representation in the life and governance of the church?**

Migrant Workers' Sunday

Fourteenth Sunday in Kingdomtide

November 22, 2020

**General Concept:** We need to have an equitable representation to the life and governance of the church to ensure everyone's involvement in the process of decision making and in the implementation of programs and ministries.

**Biblical References:** Exodus 18:19-23; Matthew 19:14; Luke 8:1-3

### **Age Level Concepts**

- We seek to have equitable representation to the life and governance of the church.
- We need to ensure everyone's involvement in the process of decision making and in the implementation of programs and ministries
- We strongly commit to ensure equitable representation of all regardless of age, sector, and geography at all levels of the life and governance of the church

### **Learning Objectives**

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

- Elucidate the essentiality of equitable representation to the life and governance of the church.
- Identify venues that ensure participation of various age levels, sectors, and organizations in church in decision making processes as well as implementation of church ministries.

**Materials:** Bible, Hymnal or song books, offering plates

### **Biblical Background**

Exodus 18:19-23

This text is Jethro's advice to Moses when he saw that Moses was the only one who handles the problems the people bring to him. The advice of Jethro consists of the following:

1. Jethro's criticism on how Moses was doing things. Moses will wear himself out if he keeps resolving matters brought to him alone.
2. Jethro's advice to choose people who can assist Moses
3. Jethro's advice on the qualifications of people whom Moses will choose
  - a. They must be teachable
  - b. They must be God fearing
  - c. They must be trustworthy
4. Jethro's advice on how to organize matters

From all these, we can understand the importance of cooperation as well as the importance of delegating tasks and responsibilities to others.

Matthew 19:14

The disciples have been struggling with pride and pomposity. Jesus taught them not just once but several times about the importance of humility. The disciples sternly hindered the parents from bringing their children to be blessed by Jesus. The story

presents two different realities. We have the pompous disciples on one hand and we have the innocent children who were deemed by the society as an important. The story is not limited to the welcoming attitude of Jesus who assured the children that the kingdom belongs to them. It goes beyond this. It was Jesus' way of challenging the disciples to change their perspective. They who are trained to continue the ministry must welcome people from all walks of life and most especially those who needs the kingdom of God the most.

Luke 8:1-3

The text speaks of women who were among those who followed Jesus and who supported the ministry of Jesus out of their own resources. Three of the women were named but the others were not. It could be noticed that the term disciple was never used to refer to women who were with Jesus. They were called followers but not disciples. The term disciple however also means follower. Discipleship is not limited to the men. Women too participated in the ministry of Jesus. However this text must be read carefully for it might lionize the traditional roles that women play like do the household chores that women do. Were they with the bond of those who followed Jesus to cook their meals, wash their clothes and do errands? Or were they treated as equals? The text is not very clear about this. One thing sure however is that they helped and did their best to contribute to the ministry of proclaiming the Kingdom of God and was even generous with their resources.

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Hymn "Come, Let Us Worship Our God Now"

Hymnal of Faith Journey, 7

Come, let us worship our God now, with our joyful songs of praise,  
Strength and power as Rising, to the great eternal God.

Let all our hearts be united, to feel the presence of God,  
In the act of worship, drawing near to our loving God.

Opening Prayer (Request the youngest among the participants to lead the prayer)

#### **Learning Time**

*Discovering the Biblical Truth*

- In a manila paper write the different positions/offices in the local church.
- Ask the participants to check what offices/positions they have had.
  - The facilitator must be observant as to who among the participants have checked less or many and what are their gender.

- Have the participants reflect on the activity.
  - What have they observed in terms of participation in the life and work of the church?
- Request somebody to read the text.
- Reflect on the text
 

Guide questions for discussion:

  - a. What does the text say about participation in the ministry?
  - b. How do you assess the attitude of the disciples in Matthew 19:14 and the women in Luke 8:1-3 if you were to base it on Jethro's suggestion?

### *Lessons Learned*

Allow the participants to assess their level of participation in the church and decision making as well as their participation in the actual implementation.

How would they rate themselves based on Jethro's idea of a worthy judge who can assist Moses?

- What qualities mentioned by Jethro do they want to inculcate in themselves?
- What can be done to inculcate these attitudes and characters in the children who will be the future leaders of the church?

### *Applying the Lessons Learned*

#### *Program Plan Review.*

Request the Church Council to review the action plan of the local church in order to see if the participation and representation of church organizations, sectors and age levels are taken into consideration.

## **Closing Time**

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

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

Closing Prayer (Request the Oldest participant to end the session with a prayer)



