

## Lesson 26: *What do we mean by ecumenicity?*

### Stewardship Sunday

First Sunday of Advent

November 29, 2020

**General Concept:** *Ecumenicity means promoting better understanding, relationship and cooperation with various religious denominations and different faith communities.*

**Biblical References:** Ephesians 2:22; Galatians 3:28, John 17:21,

### Age Level Concepts

- *Ecumenicity means promoting better understanding and cooperation towards universal Christian unity among different religious denominations.*
- We affirm the ecumenical character of our church.
- We continue to establish local and international partnership in mission.
- *We intensify the mission work with our local and international partners.*

### Learning Objectives

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

- Articulate their understanding of the concept “ecumenicity”
- Cite examples of partnerships wherein their local church is involved with
- Share experiences or learnings from ecumenical activities the local church had been involved in.
- Suggest ways to further enrich ecumenical relations with other religions and denominations

**Materials:** Bible, hymn book, manila papers, markers or pentel pen, tape

### Biblical Background

Galatians 3:28

We have read from the early chapters of the book of Acts that the Christian church started in Jerusalem and it was mostly consisted of Jews. As the apostles moved out to do their preaching in other places, large number of Gentiles were converted, believed and became part of the growing and expanding church. With the Jews and Gentiles in the same church, problems soon arose.

Many of the Jews who became Christians were still Jewish in their outlook and considered Christianity as a sort of an improved Judaism. Though they were pleased to see Gentiles joining the church but they were not pleased to see what is happening in the church. They find it not right for people of any nationality or race to join the community of God’s people without taking into consideration the Jewish laws relating to food, cleansing and circumcision.

On one occasion Jewish traditionalists in the Jerusalem church rebuked Peter for eating with Gentiles, but when Peter explained how God had shown him that he

blesses Jews and Gentiles alike, they said no more ([Acts 11:1-18](#)). However, many were not fully convinced, and when Paul returned to Syrian Antioch after his first missionary journey, trouble broke out again.

Soon after Paul corrected the trouble at Antioch, he heard that the Judaisers had spread their teaching to the recently established churches in Galatia. He was angry at the Judaisers for upsetting the young Christians, and shocked that the Christians had believed them ([Galatians 1:6](#); [Galatians 3:1](#)). In response he sent off the sharply worded letter known to us as Galatians.

In this letter Paul asserts that Christians are saved by faith and live by faith. They are not saved by the law of Moses, nor are they governed by it; yet at the same time they are not lawless. They are under the direction of the indwelling Spirit of God ([Galatians 3:3](#); [Galatians 5:1](#); [Galatians 5:13](#); [Galatians 5:16](#); [Galatians 5:18](#)).

Paul also asserted that since the coming of Christ, all believers are united in him and are God's children, regardless of race, social status, sex or the law. Being part of Christ, they are part of Abraham's promised offspring. Those justified by faith are Abraham's true descendants (27-29).

John 17:21

In the final part of his prayer in the garden of Gethsemane before he was captured, 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](#)). (Bridgeway Bible Commentary)

Ephesians 2:22

No longer are the 'near' Jews more privileged than the 'far off' Gentiles. In Christ there is no longer a distinction between Jews and Gentiles, for all who believe are God's people. All have equal status as citizens of God's heavenly city, all are members of his family, and all come into his presence through the one Spirit (17-19). The new temple in which God dwells is not a building like the old Jewish temple. It is a spiritual dwelling place. Apostles and prophets form the foundation, other believers form the main building, and all is built around and built into Christ (20-22).

### ***Notes for the Teacher***

Christ's work and ministry encompasses not only God's relationship with the individual human being, but also God's relationship with the structures of social life, world of nature and with whole cosmos and whole universe.

“Ecumenical” comes from the word “Oikoumene.” “Oikein” means “to dwell, to inhabit.” In the Septuagint, the Hebrew Word for “world”, “earth”, and “land” were usually translated into “oikoumene.”

The “world.” and those who dwell therein (Psalm 24:1, RSV). In the New Testament, oikoumene usually meant, “the whole inhabited earth.”

*“...and this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the “whole world” (Matthew 24: 14).*

In the Hellenistic world, the word also carries political and cultural connotations in addition to its geographical sense.

The word “ecumenical” is now used generally to refer to a modern movement for cooperation and unity which seeks to manifest the fundamental unity and universality of the Church of Christ... ( A Study Guide on UCCP CBL)

Ecumenism is a movement promoting unity among Christian churches or denominations. It is also a movement that promotes worldwide unity among religions through greater cooperation and improved understanding towards a goal of harmonious co-existence with all humanity and God’s creation experiencing abundant life to all creatures. An ecumenist is a supporter of ecumenism or a person who praxis ecumenism. Ecumenicity on the other hand means promoting better understanding and cooperation towards universal Christian unity among different religious denominations.

UCCP is a product of the ecumenicity of protestant churches in the past— Presbyterian, United Brethren, Methodist, Disciples, Congregational, and some indigenous churches. Ontologically, one of its life works and praxis is ecumenicity as evident in the UCCP Declaration of Principles and UCCP Statements and Resolutions (*Resolution Expressing and Adherence to Ecumenical Church, General Assembly 12-17 May 1952; Resolution on Pronouncement of the World Council of Churches Concerning Relation with Other Christian Bodies, General Assembly, 21-27 May 1962; Statement of Christian Unity General Assembly, 31 May - 5 June 1964; Statement on Relation with Roman Catholics and Others, General Assembly, 31 May- 5 June 1964; Seeking Unity in Christ-Executive Committee, 8-9 December 1967; A Joint Communique 8-9 December 1967; Policy Statement on Ecumenical Relations Council of Bishops, May 1986; & Toward Policy Statements on UCCP Ecumenical Views of Relationships, General Assembly, 2-24 May 1986).*

Throughout the UCCP history, we relate with some churches and denominations and world confessional bodies through the framework and structures of the *National*

*Council of Churches (NCCP), World Council of Churches (WCC), Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), and World Methodist Council (WMC).* These relationships are defined in the constitution and by-laws Memorandum of Agreements and Concordat adopted by these churches. The NCCP-member churches with which the UCCP relates are the following: *Philippine Independent Church (PIC), United Methodist Church (UMC), Lutheran Church of the Philippines (LCP), Salvation Army Church (SAC), Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches (CPBC), Philippine Episcopal Church (PEC), Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en las Islas Filipinas (IEMELIF), Iglesia Unida de Cristo (UNIDA), Lingap Pangkabataan Foundation, and the Christ-Centered Church (CCC).* We also relate with non-NCCP Churches and sectoral groups in the manner on development projects and programs, doing ministries like evangelism, prayer rallies and worship, use of pulpit and church facilities, and on church workers participating in any ecumenical movement.

The need of finding understanding among ecumenical partnerships is to work together on certain projects and foremost doing the responsibility together. As the UCCP can start its organic unity through study and finding commonalities, these would probably pursue a deeper unity that might extend to an organic unity of the churches around the world. Let us be reminded that the prayer of Jesus does not limit to make a common understanding of God's mission but to be united in word, in body, and in the spirit that the world may believe that Jesus is truly the Son of the Living God. The ecumenicity can truly make one's faithfulness to Christ into action if we are willing to unite and continue to unite with other churches and non-church based communities who believe God's Reignship is for all.

STATEMENT ON ECUMENICAL RELATIONS<sup>2</sup> General Assembly 16-20 May 1974

The whole body of Christ, local, national and universal, is the witness, the mission of God's loving concern here on earth. To live in division is sin. Where there is no unity, the vision is blurred, and the evangelistic task of liberating men from sin is doomed. In the pursuance of our evangelistic task we affirm unity in the midst of diversity. We shall join to witness an ecumenical life together, and local congregation, denomination, religious or non-religious bodies where God is active in love, hope, and faith for the glory of God and salvation of mankind."

### **Suggested Lesson Outline**

#### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Songs "We Are One In Community" HFJ,273

We are one in community, united by the spirit

And bound with freedom and love

We are called to be brothers,sisters,family

We are bound in Jesus Christ  
In Him we work and praise the Father, Son, Holy Spirit,  
The Good News of salvation, proclaimed in words and deeds.

We are one in community, together we are working  
With understanding, respect, sharing love to all  
God's Command we will obey, reconciling us to God,  
And caring for the weak and hungry, freedom to the captives,  
Rebuke to all the wicked, to share God's Holy Word.

#### Opening Prayer

With thanksgiving and praise, we come together as a body empowered  
by Your Word. May our study today helps us to deeply understand the  
character of our church. Enlighten us, O Lord with the help of your  
Spirit. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen

#### Learning Time

##### *Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Assign 3 learners to read the biblical texts for today's session. Divide the  
class into three groups. Assign to each group a biblical text and ask them to  
respond to the questions:

##### Group 1 - Galatians 3:28

- What could have happened inside the church of Galatia that prompted Paul to write the letter?
- What kind of a relationship or a community does Paul wanted the Christians in Galatia to foster?
- How could that kind of Christian community Paul promotes to the Christians in Galatia be achieved?

##### Group 2 - John 17:21

- What do you think was Jesus' greatest desire when he prayed to God?
- What kind of a community of believers Jesus envisioned to be formed?
- Why do you think Jesus liken the characteristic of the community of believers he hoped to be achieved to his relationship with his Father?

##### Group 3- Ephesians 2: 19-22

- What could have happened inside the church of Ephesus that prompted Paul to write the letter?
- What kind of a relationship or a community does Paul wanted the Christians in Ephesus to foster?

- How could that kind of Christian community Paul promotes to the Christians in Galatia be achieved?

### *Lessons Learned*

Tell the groups to write their responses on a Manila paper provided. Let the groups share their responses to the questions. From the responses, identify the commonalities and relate it to the concept of “ecumenicity.”

The facilitator may discuss first the meaning of ecumenicity or the ecumenical character of the church (refer to the Background Notes for the teacher) Then ask the following:

- Why can you say that having a better understanding and cooperation towards universal Christian unity among different religious denominations is in line with what Jesus prayed for in the garden?
- How can this be achieved today considering the differences in tradition and practices of the different religious groups?
- What are the established ecumenical partnerships your local church is actively participating in?
- What are the concrete manifestations of these relationships or partnerships?

### *Applying the Lessons Learned*

In order for our ecumenical relationships or partnership to flourish, suggest concrete ways in which all participating churches can work on.

What are the existing ecumenical partnerships our local church have?	What other Christian churches or faith communities can our church possibly partner with?	Suggest ways to further the ecumenical partnership and/ or ways to establish new partnerships.

### **Closing Worship**

Offering

Closing Song

“We are One in Community” 3rd stanza

We are one in community, empowered by the spirit

Now working in you and me.

Different gifts bestowed, we must work in one accord.

For we serve one Lord alone, so we shall break the walls  
dividing,

Break all pride and prejudice, to share the love of Jesus

And greet each one, Shalom!

Closing Prayer (an elder may be asked to lead the closing prayer)

*Lesson 27: How do we express our ecumenicity?*

Family Sunday

Human Rights Sunday

Second Sunday of Advent

December 06, 2020

**General Concept:** We express our ecumenicity through relating, participating and working together with other Christian churches and faith communities towards the restoration of the whole creation and establishment of God's kingdom

**Biblical References:** 3 John 1:5-8, Mark 9: 38-41

**Age Level Concepts**

- We express our ecumenicity through relating, participating and working together with other Christian churches and faith communities towards the restoration of the whole creation and establishment of God's kingdom.
- Our church actively involves in the ecumenical works with other churches and other faith communities.

**Learning Objectives**

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

- Share how the local church relates and participates in the ecumenical efforts with the partners.
- Mention the gaps, problems, and issues encountered in the process of establishing ecumenical relations
- Identify the concerns and issues that unify and strengthen the ecumenical partnerships
- Suggest ways to fort

**Materials:** Bible, hymn books, masking tape, Manila paper

**Biblical Background**

3 John 1:5-8

In the letter known as 1 John, the apostle John opposed a kind of false teaching that seems to have been centered in Ephesus (1 John 2:26; 1 John 4:1). In 2 John he warned against traveling preachers who were spreading this teaching around other churches of the Ephesus region (2 John 1:7; 2 John 1:10). However, not all traveling preachers were trouble-makers. Some were preachers of the true gospel, and 3 John was written to a



church leader named Gaius, to encourage him to keep supporting such people, in spite of the difficulties he faced.

The letter does not state which church Gaius belonged to, but his difficulties were chiefly concerned with a man named Diotrophes who had worked himself into a position of power in the church. Diotrophes refused to receive the traveling preachers, claiming that they were representatives of the apostle John, whom he opposed. John's letter, therefore, in addition to giving encouragement to Gaius, gave advice concerning how to deal with Diotrophes (3 John 1:9-10). (Donald C. Fleming, Bridgeway Bible Commentary)

Mark 9: 38-41

Even if Jesus was nearing his end- capture, suffering and death, he never stopped teaching the disciples about the kingdom and how one should live as his disciple. Jesus used all opportunities to teach them. Aside from arguing who should sit next to Jesus on his throne, the disciples brought to Jesus the concern about other people who do not belong to their group but are performing miracles in his name.

Jesus responded by emphasizing that the disciples should have a loving concern for the weak, the helpless and the lost. They should not want any to miss out on his salvation (Matthew 18:10-14). They must love others, and not act like those who tried to stop a man from casting out demons in Jesus' name because he did not belong to Jesus' apostolic group. The man feared God, and God used him to deliver people from the power of evil. He was not an enemy of Jesus, and the apostles were not to despise him or hinder him in his work. If people do acts of kindness to others, and do them with the right motives, God will reward them no matter how insignificant those acts may appear to be (Mark 9:38-41; Luke 9:49-50).

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## POLICY STATEMENT ON ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

Council of Bishops 1986

The United Church of Christ in the Philippines is an ecumenical endeavor by the union of five Churches —Presbyterian, United Brethren, Philippine Methodist, Disciples, Congregational and some indigenous churches -- and has been in the forefront of ecumenical dialogue and movements. By the very nature of its historical background the UCCP is a member of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, the World Council of Churches, the Christian Conference of Asia, the World Methodist Council, and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Being a united and uniting Church, her character is evangelical and evangelistic, her ministry is wholistic, her concerns are universal and inclusive, her spirit is progressive and her attitude is open-minded.

The UCCP is open to the spirit of new ecumenism which goes beyond the traditional denominational lines. This new ecumenism has come out of the Church's ministry in identity and solidarity with the



people's struggle for justice, peace, and freedom. Its main objective is the restoration of the individual to full humanhood and the transformation of society to usher in the Kingdom of God.

With the above understanding and spirit, the UCCP adopts the following policy statements:

1. For a more united and effective Christian witness and service of the Christian churches, the UCCP relates herself with churches, denominations and world confessional bodies through the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) World Council of Churches (WCC), Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), and World Methodist Council (WMC). These relationships are defined in the Constitution and By-laws, memoranda of agreements and concordats adopted by these churches. The NCCP-member churches with which the UCCP relates are the following: Philippine Independent Church (PIC), United Methodist Church (UMC), Lutheran Church of the Philippines (LCP), Salvation Army Church (SAC), Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches (CPBC), Philippine Episcopal Church (PEC), Iglesia Evangelica in Las Islas Filipinas (IEMELIF), Iglesia Unida de Cristo (UNIDA), and the Christ-Centered Church (CCC).

2. With regards to the non-NCCP Churches and other groups, the UCCP relates to them in the following manner:

a. On development projects/programs

The UCCP in the local, conference and jurisdictional levels may engage in development projects/programs with any religious or non-sectarian groups on the following guidelines:

1. that these projects/programs are mutually agreed upon after consultations by the parties concerned.
2. that these are endorsed by the following entities, where any of these are considered:
  - a. local church council or the pastor;
  - b. conferences executive committee or the moderators;
  - c. jurisdictional executive committee of the bishop;
  - d. General Assembly Executive Committee or the General Secretary;

3. That if these projects/programs use primarily the facilities, equipments, and involve the UCCP pastors and church members, said projects/programs should be under the management and control of the UCCP.

4. That in the periodical evaluation of the projects/programs, the office of moderators, the bishops, or the general secretary, or their duly authorized representatives shall participate.

b. On ecumenical activities for evangelism, Bible studies, prayer rallies, worship, and the like

The UCCP in the local, conference, and jurisdictional levels may participate as a Church in any ecumenical activities and gatherings provided that said activities are truly ecumenical in nature, content, planned and participated in by the churches concerned. Otherwise, participation should be left to individual conscience.

c. On the use of the pulpit and other church facilities

Any local church pastor or church council may invite a non-UCCP preacher to use the pulpit; and may offer the use of church facilities to any person or group which is non-UCCP, provided that there is an

approval by the church council and/or by the moderator of the conference whenever possible. Without such approval no one should be allowed to preach in the pulpit and use church facilities of the UCCP.

- d. On church workers participating in any ecumenical movement
  1. Any church worker or church leader may participate in any ecumenical group, movement or program on his own individual capacity, provided that such action is not inimical to the unity and growth of the church and provided further that he/she informs his/her immediate group to which he/she is responsible;
  2. Provided further that in case she/he wants to act in an official way, she/he should get the authority of the body concerned.
  3. Any church worker may be allowed to work fulltime in any ecumenical program/project not considered as conference project;
    - a. provided that he/she secures recognition from the conference.
    - b. provided that during his/her employment with this other group that he/she does not get benefits from the UCCP insurance and hospitalization plans.
    - c. provided further that these benefits are to be shouldered by his/her employer.

## **Suggested Lesson Outline**

### **Greeting Time**

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song “The Church is Your People, O God” HFJ,301

The church is your people O God, and a holy community,  
In fulfillment of your purpose, we give praise to Your holy name.

The church is your people, O God, a united community  
Whose hearts are bound together, overflowing in Your love and grace.

Opening Prayer

We come as a people gathered in Your name, O Lord. We are different and unique on our own but created by the same Creator, bestowed with the same spirit and purpose. As we study further the characters of our church, may we be guided always of Your Word lived out in Jesus. Bless this day so our learning may be meaningful. In your name, we pray. Amen

### **Learning Time**

*Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Request two people to read the biblical texts. The facilitator may discuss the biblical background of the texts. To further understand the texts, ask the following:

- What was the issue being raised that is common during Paul’s time and Jesus’ time?
- What was the advice given by Jesus to his disciples and that of Paul to the apostle in Ephesus?

- How would you react to these advices both from Jesus and Paul?

### *Lessons Learned*

Looking at the previous session, review the ecumenical partnerships your local church is engaged in. Mention the challenges, problems, gaps or issues that you have encountered. Mention also the issues, activities, or concerns that unify or strengthen your relationship with other Christian churches and faith communities.

Problems, gaps or challenges encountered	Issues and concerns that strengthen the ecumenical partnership

### Applying the Lessons Learned

Encourage the learners to share their experience by responding to the following:

- How were you able to overcome the challenges you have encountered as you engage in ecumenical partnership with other Christian churches and faith communities?
- How would you nurture and sustain the relationship established with other Christian churches and faith communities?

### **Closing Worship**

Offering

Closing Song “The Church Is Your People, O God”

The church is your people, O God, a sharing community

Every burden gladly bearing, one and all actively take their share.

The church is your people, O God, a sustaining community

Who obeys the Lord Christ Jesus, the only foundation of faith.

Closing Prayer ( a CWA member may be asked to lead the closing prayer)

### *Lesson 28: What is the context of UCCP’s pastoral and prophetic witness?*

Third Sunday of Advent

December 13, 2020

**General Concept:** The Filipino people continues to struggle for sovereignty and genuine peace.

**Biblical References:** Joshua 24: 1-15; Amos 5: 18-24; Luke 19: 41-44

### **Age Level Concepts**

- The Filipino people continues to struggle for sovereignty and genuine peace.
- Our church is mindful of the people's struggle for sovereignty and genuine peace.
- Our church actively involves in the attainment of genuine peace.

### **Learning Objectives**

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

- State their economic, political, social, and cultural context
- Share their analysis and reflections on the context of the Filipino people.
- Articulate their hopes for the Filipino people given the context today

**Materials:** Bible, hymn books, Manila paper, pen tell pens, masking tape

### **Biblical Background**

Joshua 24:1-15

Nothing is recorded of events that occurred between Joshua's division of the land and his farewell addresses to the nation many years later. His life was now drawing to a close (see v. 14), and he called Israel's leaders together to pass on some encouragement and warning (23:1-2). He assured them that God would continue to fight for his people till all the remaining Canaanites were destroyed, provided his people remained true to the covenant. They were to love God, keep his commandments, and avoid the worship of all other gods (3-11). They were not to intermarry with the Canaanites who still lived among them (12-13), and were to remember that loyalty to God would bring his continued blessing, but disloyalty would bring his judgment (14-16).

Just as the people had once gone to Shechem to declare their loyalty to the covenant (see 8:30-35), so now the leaders, on behalf of the people, returned to Shechem to make a fresh declaration of loyalty (24:1). The covenant had originated with God, who brought Abraham from Mesopotamia into Canaan and promised to make from him a nation that would one day possess Canaan as its homeland (2-4). Centuries later God fulfilled that promise when Israel was brought out of Egypt (5-7), through the wilderness (8-10) and finally into Canaan (11-13). Sadly, the Israelites had demonstrated a tendency towards idolatry, whether the idolatry of Abraham's ancestors, of the Egyptians, or of the Canaanites. Therefore, they had to make a firm decision whether they were going to serve one of these gods or serve the true God, Yahweh (14-15).

The people readily declared that they would serve Yahweh alone (16-18). Joshua knew that to declare loyalty was easy, but to maintain it was not so easy. He therefore reminded the people of the terrible consequences if they broke their covenant with such a holy God (19-20). When the people swore that they knew what they were doing, Joshua challenged them to put their professed loyalty into practice immediately (21-24). He then ceremonially sealed the renewed covenant, wrote the covenant laws in a book, and set up a stone as a memorial of the people's promise to be loyal and obedient (25-28).

Joshua died in the knowledge that his strong leadership had helped the people maintain their allegiance to God. He was buried in his own piece of land in the tribal area of Ephraim (29-31). Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought with them from Egypt, were also buried within the area of the Joseph tribes. This was in accordance with Joseph's instructions, given centuries earlier, by which he had openly declared his faith in God's promises (32; cf. [Genesis 50:24-25](#); [Exodus 13:19](#); [Hebrews 11:22](#)). The high priest also was buried in Ephraim (33). (Donald C. Fleming, Bridgeway Bible Commentary)

Joshua's final words provided us readers a picture through which we may understand the life and situation of the people at that time. Israel's economic, political and social life is deeply intertwined with their religious life. In fact, it was embedded in their faith that life apart from God will bring the people into destruction and suffering. But loyalty and obedience to God through the covenant will bring about prosperity-economically, politically and socio-culturally. The situation wherein Israel find themselves in became the ground for mission and prophetic witness of people being called by God.

Luke 19: 41-44

Jesus' crying over the city of Jerusalem is an emotional account of the writer intended to make the readers fully understand Jesus' concern over the plight of the people. Jerusalem as a place/city represents not just a place for Jesus' ministry but it is also a venue in which God's plan will be fully revealed and fulfilled. Jesus' crying over Jerusalem expresses lament over the continuing political and economic oppression and the hope for liberation of God's people. Jesus' despair over the city serves as the prelude to God's salvific act - he must not only look at it but go through the road of suffering and death.

Jesus, however, was not deceived by this enthusiastic welcome. He knew that when people properly understood the nature of his messiahship, they would turn against him. The nation as a whole would reject him, and in the judgment to follow, Jerusalem would be destroyed ([Luke 19:41-44](#)). The significance of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was not political but spiritual, and therefore he went not to the palace but to the temple. He took note of what was happening there, then returned with his disciples to Bethany, where they spent the night ([Mark 11:11](#)).

### ***Notes for the Teacher***

#### ***Lumad***

Indigenous peoples roughly constitute 10-15 percent of the total population of the Philippines and are present in 65 of the country's 78 provinces. The majority of

**Military Attacks on Lumad Community Schools in Mindanao**

**LUMAD** the self-ascription and collective identity of the indigenous peoples of Mindanao.

Most of them are farmers living in the hinterlands

The Lumads have been long deprived of basic social services, particularly health and education.

9 out of 10 lumad children have no access to education

Almost 146 alternative schools and programs are providing education to Lumad children

Their eagerness to learn has prodded the Lumads, with the support of NGOs and church institutions to persevere in building alternative schools.

- Salugonggan Ta Tanu, Ikganogon Community Learning Center
- Tribal Filipino Program in Surigao del Sur
- Blaan Literacy School and Learning Center
- Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development

**However...**

Alternative schools are being attacked by state forces during military operations under BS Aquino's counter-insurgency program OPLAN BAYANIHAN.

**MILITARY ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS**

**OPLAN BAYANIHAN**

**FACTSHEET**  
(Cases of military attacks on schools in Mindanao)  
(July 1, 2010 to October 30, 2014)

No. of attacks on schools: **214 cases**

Perpetrators: Armed Forces of the Philippines (According to Children's Rehabilitation Center data)

**FORMS**

- forcible interruption of schooling brought about by direct violation of children's human rights or the rights of their teachers, parents/guardians or their community
- use of schools for military purposes and for evacuation centers as result of the militarization
- physical attack on schools and other children's facilities and maliciously tagging schools as NPA schools

**SAVE OUR SCHOOLS NETWORK**, is a network of child rights advocates, organizations and various stakeholders working together to bring light and take action on the continuing violation of children's rights to education, particularly those in the context of militarization and attacks on schools and communities.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

- SIGN the petition to end attacks on schools and communities
- CONDUCT awareness-raising activities
- VOLUNTEER during intervention activities with the children victims
- DONATE in the Adopt-an-Indigenous-People-School resource drive

**UPHOLD CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO EDUCATION!**  
**DEFEND CHILDREN'S FUTURE!**  
**END MILITARY ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS!**

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indigenous peoples (61 percent) are found in Mindanao, 33 percent are found in Luzon, and 6 percent are in the Visayas. Lumad is a generic term used by others to refer to the indigenous peoples of Mindanao, who make up the largest number of indigenous peoples in the country. The Lumad are composed of numerous indigenous peoples scattered throughout the Mindanao island. There are 18 major Lumad groups namely: Subanen, B'laan, T'boli, Mandaya, Mansaka, Tiruray, Higaonon, Manobo, Bagobo, Bukidnon, Tagkaolo, Ubo, Banwaon, Kalagan, Dibabawon, Talaandig, Mamanwa and Manguangan. They live in the mountainous areas of Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Bukidnon, Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao, Zamboanga, Misamis Oriental, Misamis Occidental, Cagayan de Oro, North Cotabato, South Cotabato, and Sarangani

Province. To simplify, the Lumad may be clustered as follows: the Manobo cluster, the Blaant'Boli-Tiduray cluster, the Mandaya-Mansaka cluster, the Subanen who live largely in the hinterlands and coastal areas of the Zamboanga Peninsula; the Higaonon or "mountain dwellers" in the plateaus of Bukidnon; and the Mamanwa in Surigao del Norte.

Indigenous peoples are still among the poor and marginalized sectors in Philippine society. Until today, they experience neglect and discrimination in terms of providing basic social services especially on education, health, agricultural support, and national budget allocation for the Lumads. So much more in this time of Pandemic where the "New Norms" of on-line classes and communication seemingly far from their reach. Before they experienced seasonal chronic food shortages because of losing their ancestral land over the so-called development projects and extractive industries including mining, dams, logging or extractive industries, and agriculture modernization. (Carino, Jacqueline K., *Country Technical Note on the Indigenous People's Issues Republic of the Philippines*: [https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/40224860/philippines\\_ctn.pdf/ae0faa4a-2b65-4026-8d42-219db776c50d#:~:text=Indigenous%20peoples%20roughly%20constitute%2010,in%20Visayas%20\(NCIP%202009\).](https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/40224860/philippines_ctn.pdf/ae0faa4a-2b65-4026-8d42-219db776c50d#:~:text=Indigenous%20peoples%20roughly%20constitute%2010,in%20Visayas%20(NCIP%202009).)

Needful to say that the Lumad community had withstood with dignity and pride of their culture even from the long historical state oppression, manipulation, land-grabbing, dislocation of their homes, false promises of claiming their ancestral land, and being the battleground of the hinterland war of the government military against the CPP-NPA. Our Lumads in Mindanao survived even in the Medieval Extended Christianity which Spain introduced, a type of Christianity that almost

annihilated the indigenous religion and culture around the world. They survived and continue to struggle. The struggle continues for they have been in the constant subject of militarization, red-tagging, and inhumane treatment from the government.

The UCCP has been in solidarity with indigenous people since its beginning. Our life work has been for the least, the lost and the last especially to our Indigenous Filipino people.

## **Suggested Lesson Outline**

### **Greeting Time**

Announcement and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song "Faith In the Service of the People" HFJ,306

Faith in the service of the people, faith in the service of the poor

This is our response to the call of God, faith in the service of the poor.

Peasants of the field have the vision of land that is rich and free

They till the land from dawn to setting sun, yet they remain to be poor.

Workers of the cities have the vision of decent jobs, decent pay

They have to work hard like machinery, yet they remain to be poor.

Students and the young have the vision of future that's bright and free,

They work and study, learn the lessons past, hope for a nation that is free.

Opening Prayer

Bless this day, O Lord as we gather and study. Grant us wisdom and understanding so that our learnings will help strengthen our faith and moves us to true service. Bless those who are willing to hear your voice through our Sunday School. In Jesus' name, Amen.

### **Learning Time**

*Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Request from among the learners to read the biblical texts. The facilitator may discuss the background of the texts. After the discussion, in order to further understanding of the texts, the facilitator may ask the following:

- What do you think was the economic, political, cultural, social and spiritual situation of the people during the time of Joshua?
- What could be the economic, political, cultural and spiritual situations of the people in Jerusalem that caused Jesus to cry?
- What similar situations do we find ourselves in today



### *Lessons Learned*

At this point of the session, divide the learners into two or three groups depending on its number. Provide Manila paper for this activity.

Instruct the learners to fill the graph based on what they have experienced, heard or seen happening in our society today.

Economic Situation	Political Situation	Socio-cultural Situation	Spiritual/religious situation

Let each group share their work. Qualify their sharing of experiences with the following questions:

- What can you say about our economic, political, socio-cultural and religious situation?
- What is the place of the church amidst these situations?
- What roles can our church take amidst this context?
- Do you believe that our context is a rich ground to do our prophetic witness and pastoral work as a church? Why?

### *Applying the Lessons Learned*

**Sharing of Hopes.** Encourage the learners to share their hopes, prayers or aspirations for the people and country given the context they have just shared.

### **Closing Worship**

Offering

Closing Song          “Faith in the Service of the People”

Squatters of the cities have the vision of decent homes to stay,  
They build their shanties on the sides of the streets just to be torn in  
dismay.

Tribals of the mountains have the vision of land that is rich and free,  
They work and struggle and protect the land, from the greed of the  
pow’rs that be.

People of the church have the vision of Kingdom of God on earth,  
a kingdom of justice and righteousness, a kingdom of joy and love.

Closing Prayer ( request a member of the Council to lead the closing prayer)

*Lesson 29: What is the context of the indigenous faith communities?*

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 20, 2020

**General Concept:** The indigenous faith communities continue to struggle for self-determination and defense for their ancestral lands.

**Biblical References:** 1 Kings 21:1-22; Numbers 36: 1-13; Exodus 33: 1; Joshua 14: 6-15; Acts 17: 23-24

**Age Level Concepts**

- The indigenous faith communities continue to struggle for self-determination and defense for their ancestral lands.
- Our church is mindful of the indigenous people's struggle for self-determination and defense for their ancestral land and culture.
- We pray and work in solidarity with indigenous people.

**Learning Objectives**

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

- State the situation and struggles of the indigenous faith communities
- Identify the reasons behind the struggle of the indigenous people
- Mention ways the church can involve and work with indigenous communities

**Materials:** Bible, hymn books, bond papers, markers/pentel pens, tape

**Biblical Background**

1 Kings 21: 1-22

The account is a narration about a king who at the beginning found favor in the eyes of God. But in the turn of events, due to his greed and influence of his wife whose agenda aligns with his interest as a ruler against a native of the land, things got out of hand and turned God against him.

The events so far recorded of Ahab show that his religious, military and trade policies were all contrary to God's will. The story of his seizure of Naboth's vineyard shows that he was equally ungodly in the matter of common justice. Ahab at first made an honest offer to buy Naboth's vineyard. Naboth refused, as land inherited from ancestors was an Israelite's most valued possession (21:1-4). Jezebel therefore arranged to have Naboth falsely accused and executed. People were easily bribed, officials were corrupt, and there was no one to uphold the law on behalf of the ordinary citizen (5-16).

As Ahab took possession of the vineyard, Elijah met him. The prophet announced God's judgment on Ahab, and particularly on his murderous wife Jezebel (17-24). Ahab and Jezebel had done lasting damage to Israel. Two of their sons would reign over Israel, but then the dynasty of Omri would come to an end (25-29).

## Joshua 14: 6-15

By far the largest portions of Canaan went to the chief tribes, those of Judah and Joseph (cf. [Genesis 49:8-12](#); [Genesis 49:22-26](#)). Judah received almost the whole of southern Canaan, and Joseph received almost the whole of central Canaan.

Caleb received his special inheritance within the area given to his tribe, Judah. Here he proved that his expression of faith made forty-five years earlier was not mere words. At that time he and Joshua alone in Israel believed that the Israelites could destroy the fearsome people of Anak whom they saw in Canaan. Now Caleb was prepared to do it (6-12; cf. [Numbers 13:25-33](#); [Numbers 14:24](#)). Joshua gladly gave him permission to go ahead (13-15).

Judah was allotted southern Palestine between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, as far south as the Wilderness of Zin and the Brook of Egypt (15:1-12). Within this territory Caleb then conquered the people of Anak. His courage and faith helped to develop the boldness of others, especially Othniel, who received Caleb's daughter as a reward for his bravery. Caleb also gave the young couple a piece of land as a wedding gift, but because the region was very dry he gave them an additional piece of land containing two springs of water (13-19; [Judges 1:11-15](#); [Judges 3:9](#)).

## Suggested Lesson Outline

### Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song      “Ginawaak Manema” HFJ,42

Ginawaak Manema, Ines inged , ines inged

Ginawaak, Manema, Ines inged, ines inged

Tinged kini igbagayden andas anakden

Kended en pamentuan sa kanden

Dirig,dirig,dirig kataren

Taman sa taman, taman sa taman

Taman sa taman, taman sa taman.

Opening Prayer

As we are going to study further and reflect on the life and struggle of your people, O Lord, may we be able to discern Your message in light of what is going on around us. Teach us always to be mindful of the situations of others. Open our hearts, minds and hearts so that we may be able to clearly see, listen and understand. in Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen

## Learning Time

### *Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Have someone read the texts for today's session. Encourage others to read along. Discuss briefly the biblical background of the texts. Post the questions for the learners to respond to:

- What is the significance of the land distributed/inherited from the ancestors in relation to the life -economic, political, social-cultural ?
- Why do you think the owner of the land protects his property from those interested in it?
- How would we justify the action of the owner/ occupant of the land in protecting and claiming their right to the land?

### *Lessons Learned*

If viewing equipments are available in your church, you may watch **Investigative Documentaries: Indigenous Communities through Youtube (produced by GMA)**. It should be explained to the learners that the purpose of viewing the video is to make the learners see and understand the life situation of the indigenous communities in our country.

If equipments are not available, divide the learners into three (3) or more groups depending on their size and number. Let each group fill the graph.

What are the different indigenous communities existing within our locality/regions?	What are the issues and challenges confronting them?	How are they able to deal with the challenges confronting them?

Let the groups share their responses to the questions raised. Further the discussion by asking the following:

- What do you think are the causes or reasons behind the struggle of the indigenous communities in our country?
- Why does the church needs to be aware of what is happening in the life of the indigenous communities?
- How do you feel after knowing the situation of the indigenous people in our community?

Or, divide the class into two and assign each group a document to read and reflect upon.

## **REAFFIRMING OUR COMMITMENT TO SERVE THE DOWNTRODDEN AND THE LEAST PRIVILEGED**

**UCCP | Posted on October 4, 2020**

(A Pastoral Statement of the UCCP Council of Bishops on Haran's Case)

‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me’ (Matthew 25: 40 NKJV) is a constant reminder that keeps the United Church of Christ in the Philippines dynamic and actively engaged in the ministry for the least privileged and disadvantaged sectors of our society.

The recent filing of a criminal case by certain Ata-Manobo individuals against a number of our members, local church leaders and church workers including fellow bishops is a sad reflection of high-handedness and hostile attitude of the powers that be towards the Church. Said filing of case is apparently stirred by the military and Atty. Marlon Bosantog, head of the legal affairs office of National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP).

We take this case as part of a grand design to shame and smear the integrity not only of those accused individuals but of the whole United Church of Christ in the Philippines for its staunch advocacies for the protection of Lumads' rights and indigenous people and for our active engagement in peace and justice ministries.

Over the past year or so, the UCCP and some of our members and leaders had been among those red tagged by the military. In fact, one of our former Conference Ministers in the Bicol Region had been arrested and detained on the basis of a trumped-up charge filed by the military. In plain sight, therefore, the case filed by Ata-Manobo in Davao City Prosecutor's Office is just another act of harassment and intimidation.

We recall that in a dialogue with no less than the newly proclaimed president then, held in Malacanang in 2016, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, assured us that he will do his best to bring the Lumads back to their own homes. UCCP did not invite nor encourage the Lumads to come to UCCP-Haran. The Lumads actually came to Haran seeking for refuge as a result of militarization in their places. As a church, the UCCP cannot but accommodate them in gesture of support and solidarity.

In 2016, then Davao City Vice-Mayor Paolo Duterte personally came to Haran and offered the Lumads free vehicles that would bring them back to their homes, but the Lumads refused the offer. The same was done in 2020 by Gov. Edwin Jubahib of Davao Del Norte but also to no avail. Clearly, the UCCP did not prevent the Lumads from going back to their homes neither did we oblige any of them to remain in Haran. It was solely their decision to remain under the refuge of Haran.

As a Church of Jesus Christ, we remain true to our commitment as declared in February 1990: “the United Church of Christ in the Philippines through its Council of Bishops and the Executive Committee in session on February 21-23, 1990 declares as sanctuaries and

zones of peace all its church buildings, parsonages and lands, hospitals and schools, and other church-owned institutions and their premises. As sanctuaries, these places and premises are open to all people, regardless of color and creed, sex and status, and of political and religious affiliation, at all times, in all circumstances of need. We welcome those needing sanctuary to use these places for protection, study, reflection, retreat, prayers and meditation, or simply for rest and quiet.”

Let it be made very clear that the UCCP is ready to face the accusers in court to prove the innocence and guiltlessness of our members and church workers who are among the respondents. All the allegations in the case are unfounded and tall tales that are too incredible to be true.

As leaders of the Church, we abhor such act of falsehood even as we also call on the accusers and those behind their action to stop besmirching our church, our members and church workers. As the Prophet Isaiah puts it, in Isaiah 5:18: “Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of falsehood, and wickedness as with cart rope...”

We also call on all UCCP faithful to join us in sober prayers and support for our fellow UCCP members who are drawn into this quagmire of trickery and sham. Let us continue to be ONE in living out our shared calling as God’s ambassadors of peace, justice and love! “With Christ on our side, even the gates of hell will not prevail over us!” (Matthew 16: 18).+

THE UCCP COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

September 28, 2020

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General Secretary

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North Luzon Jurisdictional Area

Bishop Emergencio D. Padillo  
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Southeast Mindanao Jurisdictional Area

**STATEMENT OF CONCERN ON AN ORGANIC ACT  
FOR THE CORDILLERA AUTONOMOUS REGION**

Council of Bishops  
24 November 1989

On December 27, 1989, Republic Act. 6766 entitled An Organic Act for the Cordillera Autonomous Region shall be subjected to a plebiscite in the provinces of Benguet, Mountain Province, Ifugao, Abra and Kalinga-Apayao, and the chartered City of Baguio. Affected are the Cordillera people who are of diverse religious, cultural, and social milieu.

Diverse in socio-cultural identity, they shall go to the polls, hopefully one in the aspiration for self-determination and in the expression of the freedom of choice to chart their own destiny as Filipinos. History reveals that for years the Cordillera people have been subjected to humiliation and discrimination. They have been regarded as subordinate citizens not worthy of respect, nor deserving of a decent and progressive livelihood. They have been marginalized as a minority people and even forced to accept their marginality while their land and cultures have been exploited and displayed to entertain the world.

Today, these indigenous people of the Cordillera continue to suffer as victims of brutal attacks because of militarization and political repression that have worsened the already miserable life that they have had to endure.

This situation is further aggravated by the implementation of the Total War Policy which does not distinguish between combatants and civilians. As a Church bound to Jesus Christ and called to minister in the context of the Philippines, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines affirms the aspirations of Moro and Tribal Filipinos as they seek the preservation of their land, their culture and their integrity as people. Moreover, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines believes that the people in the proposed autonomous region have the right to self-determination and to determine their future through peaceful, democratic processes.



Furthermore, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines is concerned about the level of understanding among our people as to the contents and intentions of the Republic Act No. 6766. As of this date, we know that copies of the said Bill are not yet in the hands of those affected. The United Church of Christ in the Philippines, therefore, would like to participate in the on going educational campaign through consultations, symposia, fora and seminars, throughout the Philippines. We hope to bring into

dialogue men, women and youth leaders of the Cordillera peoples on the following:

1. To view Republic Act. 6766 as a possibility to bring the Cordillera people together to build the proposed autonomous region where trust and confidence can be fostered and a community of peace, prosperity, justice and unity may prevail.
2. To unlearn prejudices and change attitudes as we move towards a wider inter-faith fellowship.
3. To arrive at a common decision for Republic Act No. 6766, or plan alternatives which shall be more conducive and responsive to the common aspiration of the Cordillera people in the proposed autonomous region. This concern shall be shared with the constituents of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, the member churches of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, the Office of the President and Congress and organizations such as Kalipunan ng mga Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas and Cordillera People's Alliance.

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Ask the same questions provided above for sharing and discussion)

#### *Applying the Lessons Learned*

REFLECTION SHARING. Tell the learners to share their realization/reflection on the situation of the indigenous people by completing the sentence.

- As a member of UCCP, our beliefs and principles dictate that

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OR

- One way the church can help our indigenous brothers and sisters is through\_\_\_\_\_.

### **Closing Worship**

Offering

Closing Song “Pray for a World” HFJ, 371

Pray for a nation just and fair, that seeks the welfare of us all,  
Where leaders guide with prudent care  
To nurture life for great and small.

Closing Prayer (Request from among the women learners to lead in the closing prayer)

### *Lesson 30: How do we understand our pastoral witness?*

First Sunday after Christmas

December 27, 2020

**General Concept:** *Pastoral witness means being one with the people in their struggles and aspirations in whatever situations they are in.*

**Biblical References:** Ezekiel 34: 11-16; John 10:14-18; 1 Peter 5:2-3

### **Age Level Concepts**

- Pastoral witness means being one with the people in their struggles and aspirations in whatever situations they are in.
- Our church is a sanctuary for displaced and people in conflict.
- We pray, involve and commit to the pastoral ministry of our church.

### **Learning Objectives**

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

- Articulate their understanding of the church’s “pastoral” witness
- Point out reasons why pastoral witnessing is part of the mission of the church
- Mention ways how the church can commit and involve in doing pastoral witness

**Materials:** Bible, hymn books

### **Biblical Background**

Ezekiel 34:11-16

The leaders of Israel, whether of the northern kingdom or the southern, were supposed to be shepherds, but instead of caring for the people they exploited them. Their sole concern was for themselves (34:1-4). Because of their neglect of the flock, the sheep

were attacked and scattered. Because of the corruption of its leaders, Israel was destroyed by hostile nations and its people taken captive into foreign countries (5-6).

God will therefore punish the shepherds, but he will rescue the scattered sheep and bring them back to their home (7-10). God himself will be their new shepherd. He will feed them and care for them (11-15). While being sympathetic to those who are afflicted, he will act with strict justice against those who are oppressive (16).

Having taken the flock under his control and care, the true shepherd will remove from it those who, in their greed and selfishness, spoiled the pastures and dirtied the water for others. God will punish those who made themselves rich and powerful by trampling on the rights of their fellow citizens (17-19). When God has removed those who oppressed others for their own advantage, he will set up his Messiah to rule over his people in love and righteousness. The ideal that David wished for but never experienced will then be a reality (20-24).

Ezekiel speaks of the new relationship between God and his people as a covenant of peace. A bond of harmony exists between the good shepherd and his sheep. As the shepherd protects his flock from wild animals and gives his sheep good pastures, so God will protect his people from their enemies and give them agricultural prosperity (25-29). His people will respond with true loyalty. They will be his people, and he will be their God (30-31).

John 10:11-18

Jesus was the true shepherd and spiritual leader of the people, but the scribes and Pharisees fought against him, setting themselves up as leaders. By teaching human traditions instead of God's commandments, they enslaved the Jewish people and strengthened their own power. Like thieves they robbed the flock, like wolves they destroyed it, and like hired labourers they worked for their own profit without any real concern for the flock. By contrast, Jesus sacrificed everything for his flock, even being prepared to die for it so that his sheep might be saved ([John 10:11-13](#)).

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](#)).

Those who heard Jesus responded in strikingly different ways. Some said he was mad, but others accepted his words as being consistent with his work in healing the blind

man. The opposite reactions that people had to Jesus determined their opposite destinies ([John 10:19-21](#); [John 9:39](#)).

### *Notes for the Facilitator*

“Pastoral ministry is witnessing through the care of people. It is sharing the grief of the bereaved, counseling the troubled, visiting the sick, and be partner of the people in their search for solutions to their problems. It is nurturing people, especially on occasions which is part of the lives of the parishioners, like baptism, wedding, birthdays, anniversaries. It is concerned with the whole task of building up communities among the church groups”. ( A Study Guide on the UCCP CBL)

## **Suggested Lesson Outline**

### **Greeting Time**

Announcement and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song “The Lord’s My Shepherd” HFJ,47

The Lord’s my shepherd, I’ll not want  
God makes me down to lie in pastures green  
And leads me to the quiet waters by.

My soul you do restore again  
And guides me on to walk with the paths  
Of righteousness,e’en for your own name’s sake.

Opening Prayer

Merciful and compassionate God, we come to You in humility bearing our crosses. You have assured us that whoever comes to You, burdens will be lightened and will receive peace. May our gathering today become a moment wherein we can lighten and discern your will for us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

### **Learning Time**

#### *Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Request two learners to read the biblical texts for today’s session. The facilitator may discuss the biblical background of the texts.

Ask the following:

- Who are referred to as the lost sheep in the texts?

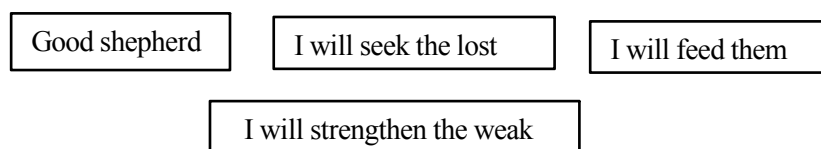
- What does the good shepherd do for the sheep?
- How does the shepherd protect the sheep against harm?
- Who is the true or good shepherd?

### *Lessons Learned*

Tell the class to point out from the readings, words/phrases that strikes them the most or which they think has relation to the concept of “pastoring”.

The facilitator may write the words or phrases on the board. Ask the learners to explain how they can relate this word to the concept of “pastoral” work of the church.

Examples:



- Taking the discussions into consideration, how would you define “pastoral” witnessing in the context of our church today?
- Why should the church involve itself to the task of pastoral witnessing?
- How would you assess the efficiency and effectivity of the pastoral ministry of our church?

### *Applying the Lessons Learned*

Distribute pieces of paper to the learners. Tell them to write on the piece of paper their prayers and their suggestions on how the church can further enhance its pastoral witness program/ministry. Place the papers on a box. The facilitator may pick few pieces of paper from the box and read it for all to hear. It is up to the facilitator whether all papers be read or not.

## **Closing Worship**

Offering

Closing Song “God, Speak to Me, that I May Speak” HFJ,307

God, speak to me that I may speak, In living echoes of your tone,  
As You have sought so let me seek your erring children lost 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.

Closing Prayer (The facilitator may ask someone to lead in the closing prayer. Include in the prayer the suggestions, hopes and prayers of the learners that are placed in the box.)