

Lesson 36: Why is vigorous Christian stewardship essential to the church life and work?

Presentation of the Lord

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

February 7, 2021

General Concept: Vigorous Christian stewardship is essential to our church's life and work because it manifests our affirmation and response to God as the Creator in whose will and power all things have come into being.

Biblical References: Psalm 24:1 & Hebrews 4:13

Age Level Concepts

- Vigorous Christian stewardship is our affirmation and response to God as the Creator in whose will and power all things have come into being.
- Our cheerful and faithful giving is our expression of our vigorous Christian stewardship.
- Our life, body, mind, and property belongs to God.
- We respond to God's faithfulness by giving cheerfully our tithes, time, talents, and possessions.

Learning Objectives

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

- State why vigorous Christian stewardship is important in the church's life and work
- Cite examples of how vigorous Christian stewardship is manifested in the local church's life and work
- Commit to make the local church's stewardship life vigorous

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

Biblical Background

Stewardship is based on the idea that all we have and all we are come from God. To thank God for our many blessings, we must give back a portion of the time, talent, and treasure that God has blessed us with. Stewardship is not a program, rather it is an attitude, a way of life. Vigorous means strong, healthy, and full of energy or life. To have vigorous stewardship is to engage in doing stewardship with full of life and doing it as part of one's life living.

Stewardship calls for us to share ourselves, to be a holy people, to step up, and to take the risk of walking with our savior, Jesus Christ. We are all called to be disciples and caretakers of God's many gifts. Stewardship is not about tithing, sacrificial giving, or fund raising. Stewardship is about conversion and discipleship. (Caring and Sharing: A Guide for Stewardship for Children and

Youth. <https://charlestdiocese.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Caring-Sharing.pdf>)

A well-known Christian educator, Dr. Elmer Homrighausen, has also said that a deep sense of Christian stewardship is what makes Christian growth possible. He says that without a deep sense of gratitude for what God has done for us, Christian nurture cannot take place. Such gratitude, which we have attempted to show as the distinguishing mark of Christian stewardship makes Christian education possible. (Paul W. Denier, *Toward a theology of Christian Stewardship*. 1967)

Psalm 24:1

“The earth is the Lord’s and all the things thereof.” (Psalm 24:1). The whole world and all that is in it belongs to God alone. God is the Creator of the earth thus, God owns everything. This is to say that all our worldly goods- material, natural, personal, family, collective or corporate all belonged to God who is the very source and author of all things good. It also says that God has the full right of everything which in a sense similar to our right of property in anything that is the production of our hands, or our labor or skill. We claim that as our own. We feel that we have a right to use it, or to dispose of it, as we choose. So also, God, in the highest possible sense, has a right to the earth, and all which it produces, as is all of it the creation of God’s hands, and the fruit of God’s culture and skill. This is what Job was trying to imply when he said, “The Lord gives and the Lord takes away.”(Job 1:21)

As part of God’s creation, God has a claim on God’s people- upon their services, upon their talents, upon all that they can acquire by labor and skill; God has a right to all that flew in the air, or that walk the earth, or that swim in the sea. God is the universal supreme Being who owns everything. This is to say that we are all accountable to God for all that constitutes the totality of ourselves. And in the final day, each one will be made to account for all things.

(Verse-VerseBibleCommentary.Psalms 24:1.<https://www.studylight.org/commentary/psalms/24-1.html>)

Hebrews 4:13

God which has all its efficacy, is wise and all-knowing. God knew how to construct God’s word, to suit it to the state of all hearts; God has given it that infinite fullness of meaning, so to suit it to all cases. God is not just all-knowing, but also omnipresent that the whole creation is constantly exposed to God’s view; nor is there a creature of the affections, mind, or imagination, that is not constantly under God’s sight. All things that are naked and opened is a sacramental offering term that speaks of exposing the sacrificed animal the face in its full view, and every feature must be seen. God is the one whom we must give an account. God is our judge and is well qualified to be so, as all our hearts and actions are naked and open to God. (Verse-Verse Bible Commentary. Hebrews 4:13. <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/hebrews/4-13.html>)

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song/s “Thanks to God” Hymnal of Faith Journey,322

Thanks to God for my Redeemer,
Thanks for all that You provide!
Thanks for times in past and present,
Thanks for Jesus by my side.
Thanks for pleasant, balmy daytime,
Thanks for gloomy, dreary nights,
Thanks for tears by now forgotten,
Thanks for peace, my soul delights.

Thanks for prayers that you have answered,
Thanks for what you have denied,
Thanks for storms that I have weathered,
Thanks for all that you supplied,
Thanks for pain, and thanks for pleasure,
Thanks for comfort in despair,
Thanks for grace that none can measure,
Thanks for love beyond compare.

Opening Prayer

We come together today with renewed strength and purpose. Everyday, we experience Your blessings in different forms and different ways. You have entrusted us with things and gifts to live life in full. In response, we raise our thanksgiving with humility and gratitude. May Your presence abide in us as we discuss and share our thoughts and experiences to enlighten us with our lesson today. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask from among the learners to read the biblical texts. The following questions may be asked to further understanding of the texts:

- What does the psalmist try to emphasize?
- How should we consider ourselves in relation to the things and gifts we possess and the Giver?
- Why must we render an account to God?

Lessons Learned

WORD DEFINITION. Divide the class into three (3) groups. assign each group a word to define or explain in their own words or understanding.

Group 1- VIGOROUS

Group 2- CHRISTIAN

Group 3- STEWARDSHIP

After discussing within the groups, ask a representative from each group to share what has been discussed.

Then after the sharing, the facilitator may synthesize the discussion and make a collective definition and understanding of the phrase “vigorous Christian stewardship”.

Applying the Lessons Learned

Ask the learners to cite examples of how their local church manifests its “vigorous Christian stewardship” and how does it affect its life and work.

Closing Worship

Offering

Closing Song “Our God in Heaven”

Our God in heaven, grant to Thy children,
Mercy and blessing, songs never ceasing,
Love to unite us, grace to redeem us,
Our God in heaven, our Only God.

Jesus Redeemer, may we remember
Thy gracious passion, thy resurrection.
Worship we bring thee, praise we shall sing Thee,
Jesus Redeemer; Jesus, our Lord.

Spirit descending, whose is the blessing,
Strength for the weary, help for the needy,
Sealed in our kinship, Thine be our worship,
Spirit descending, Spirit adored.

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

Lesson 37: What is Tithing?

Transfiguration Sunday

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

February 14, 2021

General Concept: *Tithing is an expression of faith and an acknowledgment of God’s faithfulness and generosity.*

Biblical References: Malachi 3:10; 2 Corinthians 9:7

Age Level Concepts

- Tithing is an expression of faith and an acknowledgment of God’s faithfulness and generosity
- Our church teaches us to give faithfully our tithes
- We cheerfully give the 10% of our allowance/income to the church

Learning Objectives

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

- Share their life experiences in relation to tithing
- Explain why believers should faithfully give their tithe
- Cite advantages and disadvantages of tithing
- Commit to give tithes as a response to God's faithfulness and generosity

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

Biblical Background

Tithing or giving a tenth of the flocks, fruits, and/or possessions of all kinds to their gods was an ancient practice by many peoples. The Israelites did the same. They gave to God what was due to "God" being the Supreme Owner of the land and its produce. Tithes were also given in thanksgiving for all the blessings or gifts received. People believed that faithful giving assured abundance from God.

Later on, when the priesthood was institutionalized, tithing assumed the nature of direct levy or tax, since the Levitical priests who were employed in the sanctuary, claimed for themselves on behalf of God, a title from all believers (Numbers 18:21-24) and though tithing was generally an offering to the Supreme Being, this might be given to or levied by a king (Gen. 40:20; I Sam. 8:17) – Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible, 1963).

The tithe is a specific amount of 10 % of your income that you give first, and an offering is any extra that you give beyond that. After you've tithed and paid all your bills and necessary expenses for the month, you can then use any extra money in your budget to give even more! This can include giving a cash offer to your church above and beyond your normal tithe, giving money to a charity you support, giving to a friend in need, or giving your time and skills by volunteering. So far as today, Tithing seems to be no longer practiced by many. A study of a local church in Mindanao reveals that less than 20% are giving their tithes. There are of course several members and pastors who give beyond their tenth, whether in Church or for worthy causes. They have gone beyond the "laws of the Jewish temple" and practicing a "shared abundance" with others in all kinds of life's circumstances – whether in plenty or want," in joy and suffering. It somehow had become part of their lives. (On Tithing. Stewardship A Way of Life. UCCP Publication. <https://uccpchurch.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Stewardship-a-way-of-life.pdf>)

THE ORIGIN OF TITHING

Contrary to the position held by many Christians of today, tithing did not originate with the law of Moses. It is well known, even among those who oppose it, that tithing is a very ancient practice, and may even be older than Abraham. Though historically the practice

had its ups and downs, the principle of the tithe is in the eternal nature of things, as God has made them.

A. IT IS PRE-LAW. As far as the Biblical record is concerned, the tithe first definitely appears in the Book of Genesis way ahead of the days of Moses and the Law.

- a) Abraham and the tithe (Gen. 14:17-22)
- b) Jacob and the tithe (Gen. 28:10-22)

B. IT IS INCORPORATED IN THE LAW.

One understands that the inclusion by God of the tithe in the law highlights its importance. It is something that God wants His people to fulfill as a way of acknowledging and revering Him.

- a) Leviticus 27:30-32
- b) 2 Chronicles 31:1-6
- c) Nehemiah 10:33-37
- d) Malachi 3
- e) Deuteronomy 14:23

C. IT IS AFFIRMED BY THE NEW TESTAMENT

- a) Matthew 22:21
- b) Matthew 23:23
- c) Hebrews 7
- d) note Luke 18:9-14

II. THE BENEFITS OF TITHING

A. IT HELPS A PERSON DEAL WITH COVETOUSNESS. When a person starts gaining money, it is all too common for him to want more and more. The practice of the tithe may help a man get the better of this alarming inclination. It would help him not to be ruled by his wealth.

B. IT PROVIDES A FAIR ANSWER TO PROPORTIONATE GIVING. The question normally asked is, "What is a good, reasonable, or worthy proportion?" What proportion of an income should be given to God? When can I consider my giving true giving? I submit that the tithe is the answer. It is the barest minimum for Christian giving in terms of material wealth.

C. IT ENABLES EFFECTIVE AND CONTINUOUS CHURCH WORK. We Cannot deny the fact that the Church is greatly dependent on the material gifts of its members to carry out its mission. Christians who regularly tithe are the kind of people all churches need. This is what is known as "systematic giving." Such giving helps us to be more faithful and generous in our giving and helps the Church do her job more consistently.

D. IT IS A GOOD STARTING POINT. In the area of giving, we have to start somewhere. It would prove beneficial to begin with the tithe. It can lead to a fuller, more complete stewardship of all of life. A good beginning is worth a lot.

E. IT BRINGS PERSONAL SATISFACTION. Tithing is a response to God's grace and is an expression of sincere thankfulness for which God has promised blessings.

III. ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE TITHE.

Let us take a summary of what is said against the tithe and we shall see that, as earlier pointed out, they arise from simple misappreciation and human sin.

- A. **THE TITHE IS IMMORAL.** By this they mean that it is unfair, unethical, or unequal. It is maintained that the tithe is a hardship on people with small incomes and sets too low a standard for the rich. There are those who have such a low standard of living that tithing is very difficult, if not impossible. On the other hand, there are plenty of people who have enough to make the tithe too little to give.

Those who adhere to this argument forget that the practice of the tithe is not dependent on how small or how large the tithe is, but on the motive and efficient cause: obedience for the honor and glory of God. They conveniently forget “The Widow's Offering” of Mark 12:41-44 and the responsibility of those who have more in Luke 12:48. The tithe is the bare minimum, and the more wealthy certainly are required to give beyond it.

- B. **THERE IS THE DANGER OF LEGALISM.** This can happen only when the tithe becomes a rule of law to which all must conform, whether they agree or not. They think that it is enough if one obeys the law and, therefore, feels that there is no need to go further than the tithe in their giving. This is the attitude of the Pharisees in Luke 18:9-14.

But again the tithe, for the true believer, is not just law. It is a recognition of God's ownership and man's stewardship. Tithing, then, is not simply obedience to a law but an expression of Christian faith. The Christian is not satisfied with asking, “How much must I give,” but rather, “How much should I possibly give?”

- C. **THERE IS THE DANGER OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.** There are those who practice tithing who bear the tendency of feeling superior, even unconsciously, to those who don't. Comparing themselves to those who give miserably they begin to feel that they are more faithful Christians.

But in thinking like these, it is easy to become like the Pharisees just alluded to above, who did not really pray but only boasted of their righteousness. The element of gratitude is sadly lacking. A “holier than thou” attitude is always dangerous.

- D. **THERE IS THE DANGER OF WRONG MOTIVE.** It is very possible that one gives the tithe from the wrong motive, at which point all giving becomes suspect. We cannot deny that the practice of tithing has blessed many people, spiritually and materially. But this can easily degenerate into something like bargaining with God. It is like saying, “I'll tithe if you promise to bless me.”

Because the tithe has been misused, misinterpreted, and misunderstood, we must not conclude that it cannot be rightly used. We should mark well the dangers as already pointed out. If we are willing to recognize these dangers, there is no good reason why we should not promote it. We can appeal to Christians to tithe in the right spirit, in joyful response to God who has given freely to us all. (*A Study Guide on the UCCP CBL*)

Malachi 3:10

Bringing all the tithes into the storehouse was a command by God to God's people who were no longer faithful in fulfilling their promises to God to provide food for the priests, the Levites and their families. Tithes or tenth part of all eatable things paid to the Levites, and out of this another tithe was paid by the Levites to the priests; and there was another tithe, which some years the owners ate themselves at Jerusalem, and in others gave them to the poor; and these were called the first tithe, the tithe out of the tithe, the second tithe, and the poor's tithe; though they are commonly reduced to three, and are called first, and second, and third were to use to repair of the temple.

With such command, if followed, will be largely and liberally blessed and bestowed upon them such blessings from the open windows of heaven. This means that God will give an abundance of rain to make the earth fruitful, and bring forth its increase in great plenty, which is a blessing.

Tithing also invites the people of Israel to live in a community, to care for those who are needy and hungry. This is part of the social mechanism that uplifts other sectors of the society with the help of the whole community.

2 Corinthians 9:7

Paul's advice of giving centered on the quality and its motive of giving not so on the quantity. It is all about the nature of giving and how one is to give. This is a free choice to give or not to give. It is a matter of one's very heart and the freedom to give freely and liberally which is not forced by others.

Such person mentioned above is loved by God and will be taken responsibly by prospering and succeeding in their worldly affairs. God blesses a cheerful giver.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song Give Thanks"

Give thanks with the grateful heart,

Give thanks to the Holy One,

Give thanks because it's giving,

Jesus Christ, God's Son.

And now may the weak say, "I am strong",

Let the poor say, "I am rich",

Because of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks.

Opening Prayer

Most gracious and loving God, we come together not because we must but because it is our heartfelt response to Your faithfulness to us. Embrace us

with your Presence as we try to discern Your will through the study of Your Word. In Jesus' name. Amen

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Assign a learner to read the biblical texts. The facilitator may start the discussion of the texts by using the biblical background provided. To further the discussion, the following questions may be raised:

- What did the passages try to emphasize?
- How do we understand the concept of “tithe” or “tithing”?
- How does giving of the tithe benefit the believer?
- Why should we give our tithe according to the biblical passages?

Lessons Learned

Write on the board a graph for the learners to fill in. Let the learners cite the advantages and disadvantages of giving tithe.

ADVANTAGES OF GIVING TITHE	DISADVANTAGES OF GIVING TITHE

Ask the following:

- How would you assess the practice of tithing in your local church?
- In what ways did giving of tithes help the church in its life and work?
- In what ways did giving of tithes help you personally?

Encourage the learners to share their experiences in relation to giving of tithes.

Applying the Lessons Learned

The facilitator may ask the learners to suggest ways to help promote and encourage members of the local church to practice the giving of “tithe”.

The facilitator may end the session by challenging them to commit themselves into faithfully giving their tithe.

Closing Worship

Offering

Closing Song “Lord, I Offer My Life to You”

All that I am, all that I have,
I lay them down before you, oh Lord,
All my regrets, all my acclaims,
The joy and the pain, I'm making them yours.

(Chorus)

Lord, I offer my life to you,

Everything I've been through,
Use it for your glory.

Lord I offer my days to you,
Lifting my praise to you,
As a pleasing sacrifice,
Lord I offer you my life.

(Verse 2)

Things in the past, things yet unseen
Wishes and dreams that are yet to come true
All of my heart, all of my praise
My heart and my hands are lifted to you

(Chorus)

Lord, I offer my life to you
Everything I've been through
Use it for your glory
Lord I offer my days to you
Lifting my praise to you

Closing Prayer

Lesson 38: What do we mean by “giving our time” to the Lord?

First Sunday in Lent

February 21, 2021

General Concept: *Giving our time to the Lord is an expression of giving our life to God.*

Biblical References: Psalms 103:15-16; Psalm 25:14; Matthew 6:33

Age Level Concepts

- *Giving our time to the Lord is an expression of giving our life to God*
- We devote our time to actively participate in all church activities and ministries

Learning Objectives

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

- Share how much of their time they give to the Lord
- Cite examples of church activities and ministries in which they give their time
- Explain why believers should give their time for and to the Lord

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

Biblical Background

As for mortals, their days are like grass; they flourish like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.” (NRSV **Psalm 103:15-16**) This is to say that human beings’ life is so short and uncertain. Human beings no matter how much they had in their lifetime, no matter who they became in their life’s span, and no matter how great they made an impact on their surrounding, still all are subject to one’s end. The flower of the garden is commonly has more choice, and will last the longest, for being sheltered by the garden wall, and the gardener’s care; but the flower of the field, to which life is here compared, is not only withering in itself but exposed to all kinds of weather which is liable to be uprooted and trod on by the beasts of the field. The psalmist did not just present the reality of how short our existence here on earth but reminded us of God’s faithfulness, mercy, and love that we can experience freshly each new day. (Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/psalms/103-15.htm>)

Time is synonymous with life itself, for it provides an opportunity not just to enjoy living but to be aware of God’s amazing grace and love that value our existence and of being human. To give our time to God is to acknowledge who is our Creator, the source and fount of life. Giving one’s time to God is an act of gratefulness to such an opportunity to live here on earth. Giving one’s time to God establishes a deeper covenant relationship with our Creator. Like “Friendship with God is reserved for those who paid reverence to God. With them alone God shares the secrets of God’s promises” (**Psalm 25:14**). Friendship with God is like any other friendship- you have to make time for it. If you don’t make time for your friends, they are not your friends. You make time for your friends by spending time to talk with them, communicate with them, and able to be concerned for their life-living. (Rick Warren. *Give God Your Best Time*. <https://pastorrick.com/give-god-your-best-time/>)

Jesus commanded: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (**Matthew 6:33**). If you "seek first" God's Kingdom and God’s righteousness, you will use your time as needed to do this. You will have to learn to discipline yourself in your use of this very precious element in life. Most people are not "time-conscious." They just sort of "wander" through life—letting things happen to them here and there, wasting time and not accomplishing nearly as

much as they could. How much do we spend our time a day? If we try to record our time used, we will notice that we spend much more on our games and social media more than spending our time with God. To seek God first is to make time for God knowing that God is the God of our time, the God of our life.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song “Take My Life and Let it Be” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 279

Take my life and let it be, consecrated faithfully,

Take my moment and my days, let it flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my spirit, let it move at the impulse of your love

Take my intellect and use all its powers as you choose.

Take my will, your will be done, make Your will and mine be one,

Take my heart and by your grace, make of it your dwelling place.

Opening Prayer

We praise and thank You, Lord, for this beautiful day and for all the blessings we received that supply our Daily needs. Thank you for this opportunity of gathering for fellowship and study. We seek You, Lord in the heights and depths of our life experience. We seek You today. Be with us now, we pray. Amen.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Assign learners to read the biblical texts. Ask them to explain the text based on their own understanding. Other learners may also be encouraged to express their thoughts in the texts being read.

The facilitator may then discuss the background as provided for in the manual. Or, the following questions may be raised:

- What reflections can we draw out from the words of the psalmist in relation to time and life?
- How would you relate seeking the Kingdom of God to giving of our time to the Lord?

Lessons Learned

Post the graph to the board for all learners to see. This is intended for them to see and realize how much time they have spent for their personal activities and how much time they have given for the Lord and the church’s life and work. Let them fill in the graph.

Days	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
------	------	-------	------	--------	------	------	------

and Time							
5-7 am							
7-10 am							
10-12 nn							
12-5pm							
5-7pm							
7-10pm							
10-12pm							
12-5am							

Let them assess their daily activities in life and reflect on how much time they give for the service of the Lord and the church.

Applying the Lessons Learned

Ask the learners to identify church programs/activities/ministries that they wanted to commit their time into and why.

Closing Worship

Offering

Closing Song

“Give of Your Best to the Master”

Hymnal of Faith Journey, 282

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

Refrain:

Give of your best to the Master, give of the strength of your youth;
 Clad in salvation’s full armor, join in the battle for truth.

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

Closing Prayer (Ask a member of the CYAF to close the session with a prayer)

Lesson 39: What do we mean by “giving our talents/gifts” to the Lord?

Membership Sunday

Second Sunday in Lent

February 28, 2021

General Concept: *Giving our talents/gifts means offering our abilities and skills for the life and work of the church.*

Biblical References: Romans 12:5-8; Matthew 7:9-11

Age Level Concepts

- *Giving our talents/gifts means offering our abilities and skills for the life and work of the church.*
- We offer our spiritual gifts to glorify God.
- We commit our talents/gifts to be used for the life and work of the church.

Learning Objectives

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

- Share how their talents/skills and abilities have helped the church from the past up to the present
- Identify the skills/abilities/talents that were useful and helpful in building up the church and in doing mission
- Mention the gaps and hindrances that make some members refuse to offer their abilities/skills/talents for the life and work of the church
- Encourage the younger generation of members to give their talents/abilities/skills for the life and work of the church.

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

Biblical Background

Everything that we have is a gift from God. These include every good and perfect thing (I Timothy 6:17), food and clothing (Matthew 6:25,33), rain and fruitful harvests (Leviticus 26:4), faith (Ephesians 2:8), grace (James 4:6), wisdom (Proverbs 2:6) and life itself (Isaiah 42:5) are all gifts from God. These gifts we have received are not ours alone. God gave it to us to serve God and God's people.

Each of us has something to give and share with others. It may be your money, your time to charity, your talent of singing, dancing, making art, poem, writing, your passion for making things, your being kind, gentle, and mostly your presence. If someone who is sick or lonely, do volunteer work or be a peacemaker, teacher, or minister that may give unselfishly of our time to our family and kin. We may choose a service-oriented occupation, or we may just do our everyday jobs with integrity and respect for others.

Romans 12:5-8

Paul explained that we have different gifts according to God's grace given to us. He mentioned some may have a gift of prophesy one has to use it in proportion to his faith. If serving, let someone serve; if teaching, let someone teach; if it is encouraged, let someone encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let someone give

generously; if it leadership, let someone govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. One thing that Paul was trying to remind the believers of, is that gifts have to be used and shared with others that God may be glorified. It is not for one's self but for the whole community to live harmoniously and in solidarity with one another.

Matthew 7:9-11

Jesus' teaching in His extended, "Sermon of the Mount", gives step by step information to believers on true discipleship, followed by structured teaching on how to live such a life. It touches on how to avoid anger and adultery and the correct way to fast and pray. It teaches about charitable giving and the right attitude towards one's possession. Such training for believers will enable them to have acceptable behavior, character, and conduct that is pleasing to God. In this passage, Jesus demonstrates the incredible goodness of our perfect God towards God's children with the care and concern that a human parent has towards their offspring. "...how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who are with God." Such reminders keep us giving and sharing our talents without the concern of being emptied or be in poverty. God will surely supply all our needs.

The essence of the Christian life is in obeying and worshiping God and helping others. God has given each of us important gifts for those purposes. Like the three men in Jesus' Parable of the Talents, our gifts may be great or small. But no matter how great or small our talents, abilities, and wealth, we are required to put them to good use.

(What Does the Bible Say About... Christian Bible Reference Site.

https://www.christianbiblereference.org/faq_TimeTalentsWealth.htm)

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song/s "Nagatugyan Kami" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 298

We commit ourselves to you the Source of life,
You are the Creator God of all who have life and breath,
O God, accept us now as we consecrate our lives
Thus, we will be empowered for your service.

All our talents and time we offer now to you
Make our hearts feel, O God, your ever guiding presence.
O God, accept us now as we consecrate our lives
Thus, we will be empowered for your service.

Opening Prayer

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Have someone or two (2) people read the biblical texts. Ask the following questions:

- What are the gifts given to the believers as mentioned in the texts?
- What are the intentions of these gifts?
- What should believers do with the gifts given them?

Lessons Learned

Let the learners share from their past experiences:

- Talents/skills/abilities that helped improve the life and work of the church
- Problems/gaps/issues that hinder members of the church share their talents/skills and abilities
- Steps taken to overcome the gaps and hindrances

Applying the Lessons Learned

Words of Encouragement. Ask three (3) elders to give words of encouragement to the younger generations in terms of sharing their talents/skills/abilities for the building up of the Body of Christ and in doing Christ's mission through the various ministries and programs of the church.

Closing Worship

Offering

Closing Song "We are the Stewards" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 285

Lord, we are the stewards of the blessings from above,
And we who are created and whom you redeemed,
Our thanksgiving offer sincerely in your name,
We surrender all our lives to you, O lord, our God.

The strength that you gave us now we offer back to you,
Whatever we possess, we bring them to you,
Our whole life surrender, entrust them in your care,
Take them in your loving hand, and use them ever more.

Closing Prayer (Ask a member of UCM to close the session with a prayer)

Lesson 40: What do we mean by "giving our possession" to the Lord?

International Women's Sunday

Third Sunday in Lent

March 7, 2021

General Concept: Giving of possession to the Lord means sharing our resources for the life and work of the church as an expression of our faithful stewardship

Biblical References: *Acts 2:45-47; Luke 12:15*

Age Level Concepts

- Giving of possession to the Lord means sharing our resources for the life and work of the church as an expression of our faithful stewardship
- We share our possessions with the Church to respond to the needs of the church and the community

Learning Objectives

By the end of the sessions the learners are expected to

- Draw out lessons from the local church's life-story in relation to sharing of one's possession
- Point out the importance of sharing our resources for the life and work of the Church
- Identify the possession/s one can share or planning to give for the life and work of the church.
- Commit to share one's possession to God as an expression of our faithful stewardship

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart/ Powerpoint, offering plate or basket, Used Calendar for Sunday's Phrase, Manila Paper, Broad Pen and Memory Verse)

Biblical Background

God is the Source of everything that we use and own that enhance life. So it is only fitting and benefitting to remember honoring God with our material possessions. Honoring means giving our possession to the Lord. This also means sharing our resources for the life and work of the church as an expression of our faithful stewardship. We share our possessions with the Church to respond to the needs of the church and the community who needs our help and our care.

Acts 2:45-47

Early Christians created a new economic system which practices divestiture of goods to those who are in need. Though it was not the intention for a small, marginalized, socially powerless group to change the imperial economic structure but because of the radical call for love of God and love of neighbor, a new just and equitable economic system emerged. People who have able to liquidate their goods for the sake of the less powerful from time to time as anyone had need. Resources mean material, political, social, or practical-of any member of the community were put at the constant disposal of the Christian Community, even while individual members continued to oversee their particular resources. This radicalized the whole economic system, it introduced ongoing responsiveness to the very need of the people, it involved mutual participation in the lives of the whole community and developed an attitude of a continual willingness to hold possessions loosely, valuing the relationships within the community more than the security of possessions. This is what early Christians redefined Jubilee year- the once in fifty years redistribution of land and wealth within

Israel (Leviticus 25:51-55) (TOW Project. The Economics of Radical Generosity Acts 2:45.

<https://www.theologyofwork.org/new-testament/acts/the-beginning-of-gods-new-world-acts-1-4/an-orienting-community-that-practices-the-ways-of-gods-kingdom-acts-242-432/the-economics-of-radical-generosity>)

Luke 12:13-15

Jesus was asked by the crowd about how to divide fairly the inheritance? He answered back, “take heed and beware of the covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things one possesses.” Jesus saw the heart of the person who asked. The person was not wanting justice, he had covetousness over the possession. When someone considers one’s possession as valuable than any person, then one sin against God, for it is in itself idolatry. (Luke 12- Attitudes for Followers of Jesus. Enduring Word. <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/luke-12/>)

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

Announcements and/or Birthday Greetings

Opening Song “To You, we Offer” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 59

To you we offer songs of thanksgiving,
In this brand new day you’ve given;
Your name is holy and full of greatness,
For this gift we thank you, dear God.

In your creation we see your glory,
Shining through in nature’s beauty;
And so we praise you with all our being,
You are God the great Creator.

Opening Prayer

With joy and thanks we seek you today in this place and this hour. Be with us Lord, as we continue to discuss how we can respond to Your goodness and faithfulness with whatever we have. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask learners to read the biblical texts. The facilitator may discuss the biblical background provided. Divide the learners into two (2) groups. Assign each group a text and ask the following questions:

Group 1 - Acts 2:45-47

- What does the passage want to tell the readers?
- Why was it necessary then for members of the community to sell their possession?

- Would it be possible for the churches today to sell their possessions to be able to respond to the needs of its members and community?

Group 2 - Luke 12:13-15

- What does the passage want to tell the readers
- How do you understand “possessions” based on the text?
- What does the text tell us to be on guard of?

Lessons Learned

TESTIMONY. Ask someone from among the learners to share their experience as testimony of how the local church have been helped or benefited from the sharing of possession of members. Sharing of the local church’s life-story can be done at this point.

- What lessons can we draw out from the church’s story in relation to sharing of one’s possession or resources for the life and work of the church?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of sharing one’s possession or resources for the life and work of the church?

Applying the Lessons Learned

Let the learners identify programs or ministries of the church that they wanted to share their possessions or resources into. Ask them why.

Closing Worship

Offering

Closing Song “Work In Your Kingdom” Hymnal of Faith Journey,302

Lord, all our time we now offer in your service,
All the resources to us you have entrusted;
Use all our knowledge, our intellect and wisdom,
Our enthusiasm, strength and might, O God.

All of our talents which are your gifts from heaven,
We would be careful to use these as intended,
So that your kingdom be built up and exalted,
O God our Parent, source of love and light.

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

