

Lesson 41. Why do we remit our “wider mission support”?

UCM Biggest Coin Fellowship

Sunday Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 14, 2021

General Concept: *The Wider Mission Support sustains the mission work of the church and is our manifestation of being an integral part of the whole church.*

Biblical References: John 3:14-21; Ephesians 2:1-10;

Age Level Concepts

- *The Wider Mission Support sustains the mission work of the church and is our manifestation of being an integral part of the whole church*
- The WMS comes from the 22% of the local church giving (tithes, pledges, loose and thanksgiving offering)
- We give our offerings to support the mission work of the church

Learning Objectives

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

- Define and explain the mechanism of the Wider Mission Support.
- Explain the importance of giving Wider Mission support to the whole lifework of the Church
- Commit to help promote the Wider Mission Support and be an agent of overseeing the giving of the Local Church to one's Conference.

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

John 3:14-21

Known to be the central text of the whole biblical message, John 3: 16, “ For God so loved the world...”the passage needs to be re-read carefully and in context. Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus begun in 3:11 and extends to 3:21. The passage begins with a play on the word “lift.” It describes God’s command to Moses to lift the serpent in the wilderness and the lifting up that is in store for Jesus. The passage’s context brings us back to Numbers 21:4-9 where the people became impatient on their way. They complained against God and Moses. Consequently, terrible serpents appeared, bit the people, and killed them. When they repented, the Lord told Moses to make a serpent and set it on a pole so that anyone who had been bitten might look at it and live. The serpent was a mark of God’s anger and God’s mercy. God's people might be saved by the God of life if they look upon the image of that which would have brought about their death. So with Christ, God would save the people by having them gaze in belief upon him, lifted. In John 3:16, as translated that this is the way God loved the world, with the result that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. It is not about how much God loved the world but it is what way God loved the world. God loves not only God’s

people but loves the whole cosmos. In such love, God sent the Son to save the world just as the purpose of commanding Moses to erect a serpent on a pole was to save the people from death. Jesus is God's expression of love and longing. The light comes to find us, to illuminate our path for our sake, because God wants us. God reaches out through the Son with the sheer purpose of sharing everlasting life with us. (Sarah Henrich, Working Preacher. Commentary on John 3:14-21, March 14, 2021. <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/fourth-sunday-in-lent-2/commentary-on-john-314-21-2>)

Ephesians 2:1-10

The text presents God's immeasurable grace which has changed our reality and conduct. Paul described the before and after contrast resulting from the divine intervention which radically altered everything about who we are and whose we are, about how we live, why we live, and even where we live. God's intervening actions and the transformation brought the children of wrath to God's divine mercy and abundance of love. Such actions were driven not because we did something or how lovable we are to God but by how incredibly loving God is. Thus, God made us alive with Christ Jesus, raised us with Christ, and sat us in the heavenly places where Christ now rules overall power and dominion. Christ Jesus is in constant solidarity with Christians. True enough that Salvation is not from our works but only because of God's grace. There is a faith response that we need to act on, manifesting the gift of God's transformation for all of us. As such, we would walk in good works, our reality and conduct are intricately and indelibly intertwined in our ongoing existence of being made alive with Christ. (Richard Carlson. Working Preacher. March 22, 2009. <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/fourth-sunday-in-lent-2/commentary-on-ephesians-21-10-2>)

Giving our Wider Mission Support is our response to the love of God for the world. It does not just help the conference level but it reaches the UCCP nationwide concerns especially for the Church Workers' benefits, scholarship program of our ministerial students, property development, and help strengthen our church organizations. Our giving to the Wider Mission is one of our manifestations of being a transformed people of God who are made alive with Christ Jesus.

Stewardship: A Way of Life (UCCP Publication 2003, pp 39-40
<https://uccpchurch.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Stewardship-a-way-of-life.pdf>)

Wider Mission Support (Assessment) is a UCCP policy that all Local Churches shall provide financial support to Wider Church Mission.

The Guidelines are as follows:

1. The Local Church shall set aside 22% (some conference practice 25% like Central Mindanao Area Conference or more) of its actual gross collections every month for Wider Church Mission support.
2. Sources: 22% or 25% actual gross collection shall mean collections from Tithes, Pledges, Loose Offering, and Thanksgiving Offering received by the Local church every month. Some Conferences that practice more than the minimum of 22% Wider Mission Support.

3. Remittance: The 22% or 25% shall be remitted to the Conference immediately on the first week of the month.

4. Allocation: The 22% is allocated in the following manner:

3% or 13.7% of 22% goes to the National Office for General Assembly Operations

2% or 9.1% of 22% goes to the National Office for Church Workers' Benefits

1% or 4.5% of 22% goes to the National Office for CRI/CRO

1% or 4.5% of 22% goes to the National Office for Building Fund

13% or 59.1% of 22% goes to the Conference for its operations.

For those who practice more than the minimum of 22%, say, 25%, the Conference share becomes 16% or 64% of the 25%.

Steps/Procedures/Flow

1. At the end of each month, the Local Treasurer shall determine the amount to be allocated for Wider Mission Support by computing the equivalent 22%/25%/29% of the total actual collections from Pledges, Tithes, Loose Offering and Thanksgiving Offering that the Church received during the month.

2. The Treasurer arranges payment of Wider Mission Support (see Policy on Disbursements) and remits payment to the Conference within the first week of the month.

3. An Official Receipt is demanded from the Conference upon payment.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES

Wider Mission Support

The 22% Wider Mission Support is a basic support of UCCP.

It comes from the 22% of local church giving (Tithes, Pledges, Loose Offerings and Thanksgiving Offerings). The 22% Wider Mission Support sustains the operation of the Conference and the General Assembly

Remittance: The 22% shall be remitted to the Conference immediately on the first week of the month

The Local Church shall set aside 22% (some conference practice 25% or more) of its actual gross collection every month for WMS

Sources: 22% actual gross collection shall mean collections from Tithes, Pledges, Loose Offering and Thanksgiving Offering received by the Local Church every month. Some conferences practice more than the minimum of 22% Wider Mission Support

Allocations: Suppose we say:

For every Php 100.00 given,

- Php 78.00 is retained by the local church
- Php 22.00 is sent to the conference as Wider Mission Support
- Php 13.00 is retained for Conference operation and program.
- The remaining Php 9.00 is sent to the National Office:
 - Php 3.00 is for General Assembly Operations
 - Php 3.00 is for Church Workers Benefits
 - Php 2.00 is for Church Institutions and Organizations
 - Php 1.00 is for Building Fund

For those who practice more than the minimum of 22%, say, 25%, the Conference share becomes 16%

"Do not withhold good from those whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it."
-Proverbs 3:27

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time



Welcome each student as they participate in an online classroom through ZOOM or Messenger Room. After all learners have accessed in, say this statement, "Whoever you are and whatever you are on life's journey, all are welcome here. Our gathering even in an online venue evokes God's presence." Allow volunteers to share their "Touch-By-God-This Week-experience", sharing the time when they sensed God's presence and help.

Songs of Gathering

"Give Me Oil in My Lamp"

Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning
Give me oil in my lamp, I pray
Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning
Keep me burning 'til the break of day

Chorus

Sing hosanna, sing hosanna; Sing hosanna to the King of kings!
Sing hosanna, sing hosanna; Sing hosanna to the King!

Make me a fisher of men, keep me seeking
Make me a fisher of men, I pray
Make me a fisher of men, keep me seeking
Seeking souls 'til Jesus comes again (Chorus)

Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising
Give me joy in my heart, I pray
Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising
Keep me praising 'til the break of day (Chorus)



Opening Prayer

Our Parent God, we come to you today as a family called by you to become blessings to others. We ask for your guidance, wisdom, and support as we gather and learn more about your words and our Church's Mission Support. In Christ's name, we pray, Amen.

Getting Ready



Have a short film showing on "How Your Offerings to DMF Support Mission in the Church?" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6OiQ1nxB2T0>) Ask the class these following questions:

1. What can you say about the presentation? Do you think DMF Support Mission important to the whole church? Why?
2. Does our UCCP have a DMF like the Disciples of Christ? What is the UCCP version of DMF?

Learning Time



Discovering the Biblical Truth.

Discuss to the class the lesson's Background. Group the class into 2

Group 1- **John 3:14-21** &

Group 2: **Ephesians 2:1-10**

Ask the following questions;

1. *What was the passage all about? How does it connect with the UCCP Wider Mission Support?*
2. *What is the importance of Wider Mission Support to the whole UCCP?*
3. *Why there is a need for a local church to gift one's wider mission support to the conference?*
4. *What do you think happens when nobody gives?*
5. *Is your local church faithful in giving the Wider Mission Support? How do you take part in giving your church's wider mission support?*

Lessons Learned



Youth Reflect and Share!

In the group, assigned them to make a short presentation about Wider Mission Support and how important it is to the life and work of UCCP? Present this to the whole class and post it to one's social media account (FB, Youtube, IG, and etc.)

Applying the Lessons Learned

Youth Speaks!

Encourage a representative from each group to share what transpired in the sharing and suggest ways how can the young people be able to help their pastor in explaining the UCCP Wider Mission Support.

Closing Worship

Memory Verse:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God not the result of works, so that no one may boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9

Offertory

Leader: Being generous is one of God's images that can be seen in our lives. Let us give as we live out God's image in every moment of our lives.

Giving of our Offerings

+Offering Response *“Take My Life, God, Let It Be”* [HFJ 279]

Take our gifts, God, let it be used it for your ministry.
Take our talents and our time, let them glorify You dearly.

+Thanksgiving Prayer

Accept this offering of our gifts and our time to be used for Your purpose and will. May our way of living be always pleasing to your sight, O God. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

+Closing Song “God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdKt0-rNENA>

God, whose giving knows no ending, From Your rich and endless store:
Nature's wonder, Jesus' wisdom, Costly cross, grave's shattered door.
Gifted by You, we turn to You, Off'ring up ourselves in praise:
Thankful song shall rise forever, Gracious donor of our days.

Skills and time are ours for pressing Toward the goals of Christ, Your Son:
All at peace in health and freedom, Races joined, the church made one.
Now direct our daily labor, Lest we strive for self alone:
Born with talents, make us servants Fit to answer at Your throne.

Treasure, too, You have entrusted, Gain through pow'rs Your grace conferred:
Ours to use for home and kindred, And to spread the Gospel Word.
Open wide our hands in sharing, As we heed Christ's ageless call.
Healing, teaching, and reclaiming, Serving You by loving all.

+Prayer of Dedication (Closing Circle)

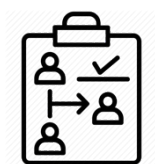
Facilitator: As we close this session, let us be reminded that it is by God's grace that we are saved not by ourselves. This is to say, that God and God alone is the only one that we must serve and commit whatever we have to further Christ's mission and support building up Christ's body- the Church. Let us now say our commitment to God.

Learners: “We promise to be Yours O God and Yours alone. Amen.

All: So help us, God, Amen.

Response: Faith - Jordan Feliz | In Christ We Dance
(Encourage everyone to Dance)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVc9VQiTMWs>



Assignment for Next Sunday

Make a one minute video about Responsible Christian Stewardship and post it to one's FB, IG, and Tiktok)

Youth At Work. Monthly projects that involve the young people of the church.



The month of March: Lent

1. Volunteer to help facilitate the Communicant Class
2. Make a Church Profile
3. Conduct a seminar on “How to Make and Deliver a Sermon” (Ready for the “7 Last Words of Jesus” Assignment)
4. #CYFSSlessoninlife. Post in your Twitter, FB, Instagram account the lessons you've learned from the session.

Lesson 42. *What do we mean by responsible Christian stewardship?*

Fifth Sunday in Lent
March 21, 2021

General Concept: *Responsible Christian stewardship means utilizing and developing the properties and other resources under the care of the church towards self-reliance and support to its various ministries.*

Biblical References: Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-37 & Haggai 1:1-15

Age Level Concepts

- *Responsible Christian stewardship means utilizing and developing the properties under the care of the church towards self-reliance and support to its various ministries*
- *Our church observes responsible Christian stewardship*
- *We live out responsible Christian stewardship*

Learning Objectives

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

- Define and explain the meaning and importance of responsible Christian Stewardship.
- Explain the importance of responsible Christian Stewardship towards self-reliance and support to the whole lifework of the Church.
- Commit to living out responsible Christian stewardship as an individual, family, as a church, and as a community.

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

Church Installation Art- glue gun, recycled plastic bottles, used magazines or newspapers, and anything that can be useful

Biblical Background

Acts 2:42-47

The scenario of early Christianity brings us to the utopian setting of great innocence, undying faithfulness, and unwavering concerns for one another. Christians continued to be in fellowship with one another and regularly had communion and prayer together. They were diligent and constant in studying the word of Christ and the instructions from the apostles. All were willing to be taught and ready to be disciplined to become disciples. What made them unique was that they all had all things common, thus, concern for one another and a readiness to help those who are in need. They had all things in common, according to the law of friendship; one wanted not what another had; for he/she have it for the asking. They were very cheerful and very generous in the use of what they had. Besides the religion that was in their sacred feasts. Christians were open-hearted and open-handed, and in every good work to sow plentifully, as those on whom God hath sown plentifully, and who hope to reap so. They raised funds for charity taken from their sold possessions and goods. They gave money to those who are really in need. Such action destroyed selfishness, pride, and the love of properties and money.

In light of responsible stewardship, the early Christians never solicit any funds outside their fellowship nor urged people to give. Because God has blessed them so much and because they believed in Christ they sold all their possessions for the service of Christ and Christ's church.

Haggai 1:1-15

Haggai is the second shortest book in the Old Testament, has a potent message that challenged the people of Israel to have great concern towards God's Temple. It tells us to put first things first in our lives which is God. To make God our priority doesn't rely on how good we worship God in the temple, how expressive our prayers are, or how we preach beautiful messages. It is how we attend to God's business of attending the poor, oppressed, and the lost. It is also caring for God's temple and matters more than our own.

In 536 B.C.E, a remnant of about 50,000 Jews had returned from Babylon to Judah under the decree of Cyrus, King of Persia. They quickly rebuilt the altar and began offering sacrifices. Two years after returning, they had laid the foundation to rebuild the temple. Their Samaritan neighbors had offered to join in the work, but the Jews refused their offer. The Samaritans, in turn, threatened the workers and sent men to Persia to lobby against the Jews, bringing the work to a halt.

At least 14 years had passed. The people got caught up in the routine of life—farming, building houses, raising families, and that sort of thing. They got used to life without a temple. Even their leaders, Zerubbabel- the governor and Joshua the high priest, had gotten used to things as they were. Into that scene, God raised Haggai and (two months later) Zechariah to proclaim the message to this returned remnant.

The Book of Haggai consists of four precisely dated messages from the Lord. The first (1:1-15) was on the first day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius (1:1, August 29, 520 B.C.). The second (2:1-9) came on the 21st of the seventh month (2:1, October 17th). The third (2:10-19) and fourth (2:20-23) messages came on the same day, the 24th of the ninth month (2:10, 20; December 18th). To sum up the first message: “God will grant true blessing when we put God’s house first.” (Steven J. Cole, Haggai Series. Bible. Org., <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-1-putting-first-things-first-haggai-11-15>)

Connecting the passage to Christian Stewardship, God urges God’s people to value their relationship in the very visible sign of caring for their meeting place, the so-called “dwelling place of God” which is the temple. Giving importance to this place does not mean that God is so anxious about the place or the temple per se but the very heart of the people that give time, talent, and value to God’s business here on earth. God is the owner of the whole world and that which inhabited on it.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time



Welcome each student as they participate in an online classroom through ZOOM or Messenger Room. After all learners have accessed in, say this statement, " Whoever you are and whatever you are on life's journey, all are welcome here. Our gathering even in an online venue evokes God's presence."

Allow volunteers to share their “Joys and Pains” this week and let them answer, “Where is God in this situation?”

Songs of Gathering

DUBIDAHDAH PRAISE GBB 19-25-07
We gonna um! Ahh! (dubidadidahdah 2x)
Let’s praise our God 2x



This is the day that the Lord has made,
We will rejoice and be glad,
Together let us join our hearts in prayer,
as we dance and praise God’s name.

“Let Go and Let God Have His Way”
Let go and let God have His wonderful way,
Let go and let God have His way;
Your troubles will vanish, your night turn to day;
Let go and let God have His way

Opening Prayer

God who is the Source of all blessings and life, we come together as one sibling in Your care. Entrust to us your wisdom that we may learn in our gathering this morning. This we pray, in Christ's Name, Amen.

Getting Ready



Group the class into two and assign each group to make a structure that looks like that of their local church. Give them 5 minutes to finish their work.

1. How do you find the activity?
2. What have you learned from this work?
3. How do you relate your learnings from the topic Responsible Christian Stewardship?

Learning Time



Discovering the Biblical Truth

Discuss to the class the lesson's background. Divide the class into two groups and in each group assign a bible passage and let them answer the following questions.

Group 1- Acts 2:42-47

Group 2: Haggai 1:1-15

1. *What was the passage all about? How does it connect with the concept of "responsible Christian Stewardship"?*
2. *What is the importance of responsible Christian Stewardship to every local church, to our conference, and the whole UCCP?*
3. *Is your local church a responsible Christian steward of God's properties?*
4. *How can we live as responsible Christian stewards in our home, church, and in our community where we belong?*
5. *How do we show our being responsible Christian stewards?*

Lessons Learned

Youth Reflect and Share!



In the group, assigned them to make a short presentation of how to develop their local church. Let them identify church property/ies that they can develop for use to locally finance the church programs, life- works, and mission. If there is none, let them suggest ways how members can support the life, works and mission of one's local church.

Applying the Lessons Learned

Youth Speaks!

Encourage a representative from each group to share what inspired the sharing.

Encourage another group to react and make suggestions on how to realize the group's plan.

Closing Worship

Memory Verse



4 Is it a time for you yourselves to live in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? Haggai 1:4

Offertory

Leader: So much work to be done, so much giving that we have to make. It's time to give and share our blessings and walk humbly with our God.

Giving of our Offerings

+Offering Response *"Give Thanks"*

Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One
Give thanks because it's given, Jesus Christ God's Son
and now let the weak say, "I am strong", let the poor say, "I am rich"
Because of what the Lord has done for us, give thanks.

+Thanksgiving Prayer

Leader: May these offerings be of great use for helping others in need. May it teach both the giver and the receiver that we are all stewards of God's blessings and we are commanded to give until we have none to share. Teach us always to be responsible of the things entrusted to us so that others may see how gracious You are. In Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen.

+Closing Song

"To the Work"

To the work! To the work! We are servants of God,
Let us follow the path that our Master has trod;
With the balm of His counsel our strength to renew,
Let us do with our might what our hands find to do.

Refrain: Toiling on, Toiling on, Toiling on,
Toiling on, Let us hope, let us watch,
And labor till the Master comes.

To the work! To the work! Let the hungry be fed;
To the fountain of life, let the weary be led;
In the cross and its banner our glory shall be,
While we herald the tidings; "Salvation is free." (Chorus)

To the work! To the work! There is labor for all,
For the kingdom of darkness and error shall fall,
And the name of Jehovah exalted shall be,
In the loud-swelling chorus, "Salvation is free." (Chorus)

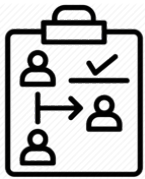
To the work! To the work! In the strength of the Lord,
And a robe and a crown shall our labor reward;
When the home of the faithful our dwelling shall be,
And we shout with the ransomed, "Salvation is free." (Chorus)

+Prayer of Dedication (Closing Circle)

Facilitator: We entrust to you our plans and we commit to being your instrument in developing not just the property of our church but also the commitment of every member to be a responsible Christian steward of God in one's home, church, and one's community. In Christ's name, we pray, Amen!

Response: "Faith - Jordan Feliz | In Christ We Dance"
(Encourage everyone to Dance)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pvc9VQiTMWs>

Assignment for Next Sunday



Make a one- minute video about Responsible Christian Stewardship and post it to one's FB, IG, and Tiktok)

Youth At Work. Monthly projects that involve the young people of the church.



The month of March: Lent

1. Volunteer to help facilitate the Communicant Class
2. Make a Church Profile
3. Conduct a seminar on "How to Make and Deliver a Sermon" (Ready for the "7 Last Words of Jesus" assignment)
4. #CYFSSlessoninlife. Post in your Twitter, FB, Instagram account the lessons you've learned from the session.

Lesson 43. Why do we encourage and provide means for amicable settlement of conflicts and disputes?

Palm Sunday

Sixth Sunday in Lent
March 28, 2021

General Concept: *The Church encourages and provides means for amicable settlement of conflicts and disputes as manifestation of our Christian discipleship and witness to the world.*

Biblical References: *Matthew 5:23-24, 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 6:1-6; 1 Kings 3:16-28;*

Age Level Concepts

- *The church encourages and provides means for amicable settlement of conflicts and disputes as a manifestation of our Christian discipleship and witness to the world*
- We respect and uphold the process of settling conflicts and disputes set by our church
- We pray and commit to being an instrument of reconciliation

Learning Objectives

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

- Provide an understanding of why our church encourages and gives means for amicable settlement of conflicts and disputes.
- Identify an experience where the local church or the CYF organization provided amicable settlement of conflicts and disputes.
- Commit to promote and abide by the means for amicable settlement of conflicts and disputes in the CYF organization and the Church.

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

Biblical Background

Matthew 5:23-24

Jesus defined to his disciples how to love God and that is loving one's fellow beings and creatures. So also, to be reconciled to God is to be reconciled first to those whom you hurt and also to those who hurt you. In this passage, Jesus clearly defined a pre-requisite in giving sacrifices to God which is a Jewish religious practice to be reconciled with God. To stand before God as righteous and acceptable is only possible because of God's forgiveness, mercy, and grace not because of one's good works or efforts. Though we have nothing to do with such grace, we need to show our response to God's love and grace by forgiving, being merciful, and being gracious to others especially to one's enemies. The prophets of the Old Testament emphasized that God hates the worship of those who mistreat or exploit others. Jesus emphasized that we could not be forgiven if we are unforgiving. He even says that we will be judged by the same standard by which we judge others. So no matter how moving the words of our worship, no matter how beautiful and comfortable the place we worship, and how expensive and lavish the offerings we give, still, we need to be reconciled to those we harbor evil against or have harmed another, for God will not accept our worship.

Matthew 18:15-20

Jesus taught his disciples how to deal with conflict within fellow believers. He said that if one wronged by another, one ought not to complain of it to others, as is often done by unbelievers, but instead go to the offender privately, state the matter kindly, and show him/her one's conduct. There will be possibilities that one will not listen to, so Jesus mentioned another means and that is to take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. This is based on the Levitical ruling on witnesses. If one will not listen

again, then the offended person will bring it to the church and if that offender would still not listen, then let such one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. This does not mean that one has to give up on that person or cast out such person in the church but rather, one will engage in such treatment based on how Jesus treated the Gentiles and the Tax Collectors. He treated them with much compassion, seeking them like the lost sheep, and forgiving them seventy times seven. (Karl Jacobson, Commentary on Matthew, Working Preacher. <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-23/commentary-on-matthew-1815-20-2>)

Such manner of Jesus' way of reconciliation would generally have all the desired effect with true believers and the parties would be reconciled. Jesus' primary purpose of coming to the world is for reconciliation and thus, as Jesus' followers, we are entrusted to this work of reconciliation.

I Corinthians 6:1-6

Paul strongly discouraged believers to make lawsuits on their quarrels and disputes for all are brethren to one another. It brings great damage to the fellowship and the whole Christian community when we use lawful means to right ourselves for Christians should be of a forgiving temper. They are trifles, and may easily be settled if you first conquer one's spirits. It would be a shame for others to settle it for us. It is a shame that little quarrels should grow to such a head among Christians, that they cannot be determined by the brethren. The peace of a human's mind, and the calm of one's neighborhood, are worth more than victory. Lawsuits could not take place among brethren unless there were faults among them.

Suggested Lesson Outline **Greeting Time**



Welcome each student as they participate in an online classroom through ZOOM or Messenger Room. After all learners have accessed in, say this statement " Whoever you are and whatever you are on life's journey, all are welcome here. Our gathering even in an online venue evokes God's presence."

Allow volunteers to share their "joys and pains" this week.

Songs of Gathering

"WE ARE ONE IN THE SPIRIT"



We are one in the Spirit, We are in the Lord. 2x

And we pray that our unity will one day be restored
and they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
Yeah they'll know we are Christians by our love

We will work with each other, we will work side by side
We will work with each other, we will work side by side
And we'll guard each man's dignity and save each man's pride

And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
Yeah, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

Opening Prayer

Triune God, we come before you knowing that you made us all in your image and likeness. Though we are different yet all are part of each other. We ask for your guidance as we learn more about how to reconcile with our kin. This we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Getting Ready



Showing a Commercial Video Ad Clip in Youtube about Conflict Resolution (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KY5TWVz5ZDU>)

1. What have you learned from this video clip?
2. How do you relate this video clip to the topic about amicable settlement of conflicts and disputes?

Learning Time



Discovering the Biblical Truth

Discuss to class the biblical background for today's lesson. Divide the class into three (3) groups. In each group assign a bible passage and let them answer the following questions:

Group 1- *Matthew 5:23-24,*

Group 2- *Matthew 18:15-17, and*

Group 3- *1 Corinthians 6:1-6; 1-15*

1. *What does the passage talk about? How does it connect with resolving conflicts?*
2. *What is the importance of resolving conflict to the Christian community?*
3. *Cite an experience in your CYF organization or in your local church where you experienced conflict. How did you resolve amicably this conflict?*
4. *Does your church have programs in equipping its members to resolve conflict? If yes, what are these? If no, what programs would you like to have?*

Lessons Learned



Youth Reflect and Share!

Give each group a life-situation. Tell them to make a drama presentation on how to resolve the conflict.

Group One - Teenage Pregnancy

CYF 1 and CYF 2 are not in a relationship. They were just drunk at the time when they made love. The boy does not want to marry the girl because he is still in grade

7. The girl is not prepared to have her pregnancy. They both ask the CYF's help on how to tell to their parents and how to handle this kind of conflict.

Group Two - Pastor vs. Member

A member of one's local church does not like the new pastor. She always had something bad to say about the pastor and his family. One Sunday Service, the pastor delivered a sermon about "Be Careful Little Tongue". Hearing this sermon, the member burst out her anger into a rage and wrote a complaint against the pastor to the Conference Minister's Office pleading that this pastor should be kicked out from their Church.

Group 3 - Church vs. authority

A Lumad community of 15 families decided to seek refuge in your local church because of the ongoing militarization in their community. A group of Police personnel arrested your pastor basing on the "Anti-Terror Law"- alleging that he is supporting terrorism by sheltering suspected terrorists.

Applying the Lessons Learned

Youth Speaks!

Encourage each group to share their dramatic presentation on how to resolve such a given conflict. Encourage another group to react and make suggestions on how to amicably resolve the conflict.

Closing Worship



Memory Verse

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

Matthew 5:9

Offertory

Leader: We received from God great blessings and love, thus, we give to show how we are thankful for these gifts and able to participate in God's mission for the world.

Giving of our Offerings

+Offering Response *"Give Thanks"*

Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One

Give thanks because it's given, Jesus Christ God's Son

and now let the weak say I am strong, let the poor say I am rich

Because of what the Lord has done for us, give thanks.

+Thanksgiving Prayer

Leader: O Great Owner of life and love, we offer to you our offerings as symbols of our loving response to your great grace. May you grant us to use it wisely for the church life-work and mission. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

+Closing Song “If I Have Wounded Any Soul Today” [HFJ 66]

If I have wounded any soul today, If I have caused one foot to go astray,
If I have walked in my own willful way, Dear Lord, forgive!

If I have uttered idle words or vain, If I have turned aside from want or pain,
Lest I myself shall suffer through the strain, Dear Lord, forgive!

If I have been perverse or hard, or cold, If I have longed for shelter in Thy fold,
When Thou hast given me some fort to hold, Dear Lord, forgive!

Forgive the sins I have confessed to Thee; Forgive the secret sins I do not see;
O guide me, love me and my keeper be, Dear Lord, Amen.

+Prayer of Dedication (Closing Circle)

Facilitator: We commit ourselves to be peacemakers starting in our family, in our youth groups, in our Church, and the whole community.

Learners: Yes, we are your peacemakers. Amen.

Response: “Faith - Jordan Feliz | In Christ We Dance”
 (Encourage everyone to Dance)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pvc9VQiTMWs>

Assignment for Next Sunday



Research on what are the *means of settling conflicts and disputes in our church?*



Youth At Work. Monthly projects that involve the young people of the church.

The month of March: Lent

1. Volunteer to help facilitate the Communicant Class
2. Make a Church Profile
3. Conduct a seminar on “How to Make and Deliver a Sermon” (Ready for the ”7 Last Words of Jesus” assignment)
4. #CYFSSlessoninlife. Post in your Twitter, FB, Instagram account the lessons you've learned from the session.

Lesson 44. What are the means of settling conflicts and disputes in our church?

Communion Sunday

Easter Sunday/ Resurrection of the Lord

April 04, 2021

General Concept: *The church provides means of settling conflicts and disputes through good offices, mediation, conciliation and arbitration.*

Biblical References: Matthew 5:44; Genesis 33; 1 Corinthians 6:1-5;

Age Level Concepts

- *The church provides means of settling conflicts and disputes through good offices, mediation, conciliation and arbitration*
- We submit to the means of settling conflicts and disputes set by our church
- We pray that all conflicts be resolved within the church.

Learning Objectives

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

- Identify and explain the UCCP's means of settling conflicts and disputes.
- Evaluate how one's local church uses the means of settling conflicts and disputes and suggest ways to improve it.
- Make a commitment to promote and abide by the UCCP's means of settling conflicts and disputes

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart/Powerpoint, offering plate or basket, Used Calendar for Sunday's Phrase, and Memory Verse, Amended UCCP Constitution and By-laws)

Biblical Background

Matthew 5:44

Jesus was teaching his disciples what it means to be his disciples in the world. This means that they will face different trials, conflicts, and even persecution from their enemies. But what separates them from all from the rest will be how they will respond to their so-called enemies which are manifesting the life of being in the Kingdom of God. The said norms will now be different, Jesus' new approach will be their life living. Love your neighbor and hate your enemy is a norm to hold on to, but Jesus suggested a revolutionary way of expressing God's love and that is to love one's enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Such action will define Christ's disciples as children of God, as followers of the light. (Lewis, Karoline. Working Preacher. <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/seventh-sunday-after-epiphany/commentary-on-matthew-538-48-2>)

Genesis 33

Reconciliation of the two brothers took years in the making and it involved divine intervention to touch each others' hearts and willingness to commit the outcome to God. Jacob bowing to Esau showed humility and submissive behavior to whatever response Esau might give. Embracing Jacob was Esau's response which demonstrates that God has the hearts of all human beings in God's hands, and can turn them when and how God pleases. It is not in vain to trust in God and to call upon him in the day of trouble. For if one's ways please God, God will even allow one's enemies be at peace with him/her. Esau received Jacob as a brother, and much tenderness passes

between them. With such reconciliation, Jacob made an altar to the honor of El-Elohim-Israel, God, the God of Israel: To the honor of God, the only living and true God; and to honor the God of Israel - a God in covenant with him. Israel's God is Israel's glory. Blessed be God's name, God is still the mighty God, the God of Israel. (Matthew Henry's Bible Commentary. [christianity.com, https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=mhc&b=1&c=33](https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=mhc&b=1&c=33)).

I Corinthians 6:1-6

Paul strongly discouraged believers to make lawsuits on their quarrels and disputes for all are brethren to one another. It matters of great damage to the fellowship and the whole Christian community when we use lawful means to right ourselves for Christians should be of a forgiving temper. They are trifles, and may easily be settled if you first conquer one's spirits. It would be a shame for others to settle it for us. It is a shame that little quarrels should grow to such a head among Christians, that they cannot be determined by the brethren. The peace of a human's mind, and the calm of one's neighborhood, are worth more than victory. Lawsuits could not take place among brethren unless there were faults among them.

The United Church of Christ in the Philippines believes in the process of reconciliation. As stated in its Constitution and By-Laws, the church adheres to the rules of exhaustion of remedies, including, but not limited to, good offices, mediation, conciliation, and arbitrations provided for in the By-Laws. No member who is a party to any dispute or conflict as these terms are defined in the By-Laws (Article VI: Settlement of Conflicts and Disputes and the interpretation of Laws)

Section 7 states the Methods of Settling Conflicts and Disputes.

Methods of settling conflicts and disputes. The parties to a controversy are expected to settle their conflict or dispute through direct exchange of views between themselves. But where their relations have become so strained as to rule out direct negotiation, the following methods as herein defined shall be resorted to:

a. Good offices. The pastor, or an Elder, or a respected member of the Church, shall bring the parties together or provide the occasion for negotiations to take place between them so they can work out a settlement between themselves. For example, the Pastor (or Elder or a respected member of the Church) may invite the parties to the controversy to his office or residence for the said purpose. At the Conference level and that of the General Assembly, the tender of good offices may be initiated or done by the Conference Minister, the Officers of the Conference, the General Secretary, and other officers of the General Assembly, or by any respected lay leader of the Church.

b. Mediation. Where the one tendering his/her good office actively participates by proposing a solution and offering his/her advice to the parties to the controversy, he/she plays the role of a mediator. Good offices and mediation may take place on the same occasion. The mediator does not concern himself/herself with the merits of a dispute: his/her task is to encourage compromise rather than advise adherence to legal technicalities.

c. Conciliation. This is the process of settling a controversy about disputed facts by referring the same to a person or persons, designated by agreement of the parties to the conflict of dispute, to clarify and elucidate the facts in issue between the parties in the hope of bringing them to a compromise settlement.

d. Arbitration. This is a quasi-judicial, informal procedure for the settlement of a controversy between the parties by referring the conflict or dispute to one or more impartial persons for final and binding determination. The arbitrator or board of arbitrators, not more than three (3) in number, shall be freely chosen by the parties themselves from a pool of Church arbitrators. In arbitration, there is a legal obligation on the part of the parties to the controversy to comply with the award or decision.

The arbitration shall be resorted to by the parties where there is a failure or inability to arrive at a settlement through such means as good offices, mediation, or conciliation and there is a strong probability that litigation may ensue between or among Church members who are parties to a controversy. In such a situation, the Church Council, in case of a controversy at the level of the Local Church, shall adopt a detailed procedure of arbitration, following the UCCP Constitution and By-Laws and in line with such rules as may be issued from time to time by the National Commission on Discipline and Conflict Resolution (NCDRC). For this purpose, said Council shall immediately constitute a pool of arbitrators, not more than five (5) in number, who are known for their moral integrity, competence, impartiality, and independence of mind. Where the controversy occurs at the level of the National Church, the Conference Council or the National Council, as the case may be, shall do likewise. An example of an Arbitration Agreement, which may be modified to suit the requirements of a particular case, is found at the end of these By-Laws as APPENDIX II.

The decision or award of the arbitration or arbitrators freely chosen by the parties to a controversy, shall, as a general rule, be final, binding, and unappealable, following law. To ensure that said decision of award shall be recognized and enforced by the courts, boards or commissions established by the State, the NCDRC shall promulgate the procedural rules that shall serve as a guide to the Local Churches, the various Conferences and the National Church, based on the Manual of Arbitration appended to these By-Laws as APPENDIX III, particularly concerning such matters as qualifications of arbitrators, manner of effecting arbitration, the procedure of arbitration, the decision or award and the compliance therewith by the parties. The Manual of Arbitration (Appendix III) shall apply in toto as the procedural rules to all cases submitted for arbitration pending promulgation of said procedural rules or in case of inability or failure of the NCDRC to promulgate the same. In case the present Arbitration Law is amended, the NCDRC shall make the necessary modification or adjustment in its procedural rules.

e. Traditional method of adjudication. Those church members who are involved in a justiciable case and wish to waive or forego arbitration, after having failed to settle their dispute through the use of good offices, mediation, or conciliation, may entrust the resolution of their controversy through the traditional method of adjudication. If and when such a situation arises, the Church

Council shall establish a local unit of the NCDCR (formerly the Local Judicial Commission), following the procedural rules that shall be adopted and promulgated by the NCDCR.

In drafting and promulgating said procedural rules, the NCDCR shall take into account applicable provisions of the 1974 By-Laws concerning the Local Judicial Commission, with provision for appeal to the higher bodies in the context of the system of Conflict Resolution under the present Constitution, always keeping in mind that controversies involving church members, officers, and the Church itself shall be resolved in a non-adversarial, non-combative way and light of the fundamental values of truth, justice, and love. In line with Article XI, Section 4 of the UCCP Constitution, “cases pending in the National Judicial Commission at the time of the effectivity of the present Constitution may be settled, if the parties so desire, through any of the amicable methods outlined in Article VIII”, namely, good offices, mediation, conciliation, and arbitration. In the absence of such a desire, the cases, if any, will be resolved following the rules of procedure prevailing before the effectivity of the present Constitution.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time



Welcome each student as they participate in an online classroom through ZOOM or Messenger Room. After all learners have accessed in, say this statement " Whoever you are and whatever you are on life's journey, all are welcome here. Our gathering even in an online venue evokes God's presence."

Allow volunteers to share their experiences about being reconciled with their enemies.

Songs of Gathering

“TO DWELL IN UNITY”

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=To1g6gIvRjc>)

Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together 2x
In unity, to dwell in unity lailailalalailalalai 2x



Opening Prayer

Lord, as we gather today, we ask that You will be in our midst. Help us to make this session be a meaningful one that will be pleasing to You. Help us to be able to discuss the matters about reconciliation with much desire to adhere to it, and to be willing to commit ourselves to the work of reconciliation. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Getting Ready

Showing a Video Ad Clip in Youtube about Reconciliation
(https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=short+film+about+reconciliation)



1. What have you learned from this video clip?
2. How would you relate this video clip to the topic about settlings of conflicts and disputes?

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Discuss to the class the Biblical Background of today's lesson. Divide the class into three (3) groups. Assign a bible passage to each group and let them answer the following questions.



Group 1- Genesis 33,

Group 2- 1 Corinthian 6:1-6,

Group 3- Matthew 5:44

1. What does the passage talk about? How does it connect with settling conflicts and disputes in the church?
2. What is the importance of solving conflicts and disputes using our Church's Intra-judicial structure?
3. Site an experience in your CYF organization or in your local church when you used the UCCP's methods of settling conflicts and disputes?

Lessons Learned

Youth Reflect and Share!

In the group, assign them to make a drama presentation on how to resolve conflict by using the UCCP Method of settlings conflicts and disputes.



Group 1: Good Office

Group 2. Mediation

Group 3. Conciliation and Arbitration

Applying the Lessons Learned

Youth Speaks!

Group presentation. Encourage other groups to react and make suggestions on how to use effectively the UCCP's method of settling conflicts and disputes.

Closing Worship

Memory Verse:

"How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!"

Psalm 133:1



Offertory

Leader: When we are resolved that God is the source and fount of every

blessing, we cannot but give and share our time, talent, and treasure to the Lord.

Giving of our Offerings

+Offering Response *“I’m Giving”*

I’m giving, I’m giving because I love Jesus
I’m giving, I’m giving because God loves me.

+Thanksgiving Prayer

Leader: Great is your love to us O God so we offer to you our offerings of love. May it be useful for Your works. In Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen.

+Closing Song **“United We Stand”**

(Brotherhood of Man)

There's nowhere in the world that I would rather be
Than with you my love
And there's nothing in the world that I would rather see
Than your smile my love.

Chorus

For united we stand Divided we fall
And if our backs should ever be against the wall
We'll be together, together, you and I.
2x

And if the world about you falls apart my love
Then I'll still be here
And if the going gets too hard along the way
Just you call, I'll hear.

+Prayer of Dedication (Closing Circle)

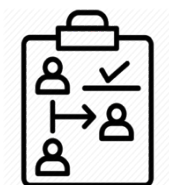
Facilitator: We commit ourselves to be God’s instrument of reconciliation starting in our family, in our youth community, in our church, and the whole community. Learners: Yes, we are your peacemakers. Amen.

Response: *“Spirit of Peace”*

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRcraUReRz4&t=11s>)

(Encourage everyone to Dance)

Spirit of Peace, to your cause we give our strength
That love may reign and war may cease
Mir, miro, mir



Assignment for Next Sunday

Research on what is Human Rights? What is the UCCP's stand on the issue of human rights in the Philippines?



Youth At Work. Monthly projects that involve the young people of the church.

The month of April: Resurrection of Jesus

1. Volunteer to help facilitate the Vacation Church School
2. Make a Parish Map
3. Conduct a seminar on how to make and facilitate Bible Study for young people.
4. #CYFSSlessoninlife. Post in your Twitter, FB, Instagram account the lessons you've learned from the session.

Lesson 45. Why does our church affirm and uphold the inviolability of the rights of persons?

Second Sunday of Easter

April 11, 2021

General Concept: *Our church affirms and upholds the inviolability of the rights of persons because we believe that persons are created in the image of God; that human rights are gifts from God and God's will is for us to enjoy the fullness of our humanity.*

Biblical References: *Genesis 1:26-27; Psalms 8:4-9*

Age Level Concepts

- Our church affirms the rights of all human beings
- God gave us rights that ought to be respected
- We assert our rights and respect others' rights

Learning Objectives

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

- Tell why we respect the basic human rights of a person
- Mention their basic human rights
- Suggest ways to show respect of other people's rights.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]) song chart, offering plate or basket, Manila papers, marker pens, construction paper, tape

Biblical Background

Genesis 1:26-27

Why does God use the plural form, "Let us make man in our image"? One view says this is a reference to the Trinity – God the Father, Jesus Christ his Son, and the Holy Spirit – all of whom are God. Another view is that the plural wording is used to denote majesty. Kings traditionally use the plural form in speaking of themselves.

In what ways are we made in God's image? God obviously did not create us exactly how God looks like because God has no physical body. Instead, we are reflections of God's glory. Some feel that our reason, creativity, speech, or self-determination is the image of God. More likely, it is our entire self that reflects the image of God. Knowing that we are made in God's image and thus share many of God's characteristics provides a solid basis for self-worth. (Zondervan Life Application Study Bible, p. 6)

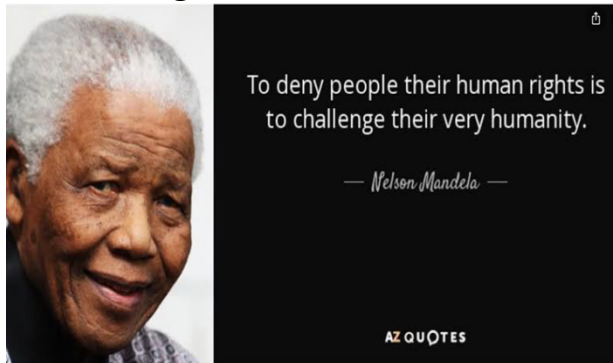
Psalms 8:4-9

This psalm mentions the majestic power of God manifested in the creation of the vast universe. Great is God's power that gives to "feeble insignificant human beings a position of dignity that makes them unique among all created things, for they alone are created in the image of God". (Bridgeway Bible Commentary)

God gave human beings the authority to use and manage the physical world in which they live. But this doesn't mean that human beings become God. Being made in God's image, human beings are to become representatives of the Creator. Their dignity and worth reflects the glory and power of the One who created them. Their duty is to pay homage, worship, praise and glory to God whom they serve.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time



Welcome each student as they participate in an online classroom through ZOOM or Messenger Room. After all learners have accessed in, say this statement "Whoever you are and whatever you are on life's journey, all are welcome here. Our gathering even in an online venue evokes God's presence."

Allow volunteers to share their experiences about being reconciled with their enemies.

Songs of Gathering

"Sino Ako?" Children Praise God, 64



Sino ba ang tao? Sino ba ako?
Sino nga ba tayo? Bakit tayo naririto?
Saan ba ako nanggaling, ang alam ko ay tanging ito,
Ako'y nilalang mo, larawan mo,
Panginoong Dios ko.

Sino ba ang tao? Sino ba ako?
Sino nga ba tayo? Bakit tayo naririto?
Ano ang dapat kong gawin?
Kung buhay ko ay mula sa Iyo.

Sa 'Yo lamang sumamba at sa 'ting
Kapwa tayo ay maglingkod.

** review songs from previous sessions*



Opening Prayer

We are created in Your image, Lord. And for that, we are most thankful. You made us unique over other created things and commanded us to take charge of your created world. For that, we gather to glorify and praise You. May your creative presence be with us today. Amen.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Assign learners to read the biblical texts. Let the learners pick one affirmation and then ask them to explain as they understand it.

- What faith affirmations can we draw out from the biblical texts?

We are created in God's image.

We are given the task to take care of the created world.

Human dignity is a gift from God.

Respect for human rights is upholding human dignity.

Our respect for the rights of people shows our respect to the Creator.

Human life is valuable because it comes from God.

Lessons Learned



Song Writing. Divide the class into two or three groups. Instruct the learners to compose a song (they may use a familiar tune) based on what they understand from the affirmations including their knowledge and understanding of the basic rights of children.

Applying the Lessons Learned

Youth Sings!

Song Learning. Tell each group to teach their composition to the whole class. Let the learners sing it repeatedly to familiarize the songs.

Closing Worship

Memory Verse. "What are human beings that you are mindful of them?" Psalms 8:4
Offertory

Leader: We are created in the image of a God who is gracious and faithful. Let us reflect that image by giving our gifts and offering of life and commitment.

Giving of our Offerings
+Thanksgiving Prayer



Leader: We give to you these symbols of gratitude and thanksgiving. May you find it worthy of Your acceptance, Lord. Bless the hands that toil and the hearts that are grateful and humbly recognize You as the Source of Life. These we all give thanks in Jesus' name. Amen

Closing Song “Pray for a World” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 371

Pray for a world where every child finds welcome in a sheltered place,
Where love is tender, undefined, and firmness intertwines with grace.

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.

Pray for a world where all have voice and none will batter, rape, abuse,
Till then, may all have rightful choice and pray for wisdom as they choose.

+Prayer of Dedication (Closing Circle)

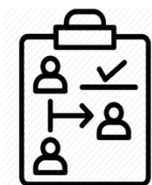
We thank you Lord for making us your representatives to the world. May we truly reflect your goodness and love to the world as we are created to image You. Teach us always to respect the dignity of persons by upholding their God-given rights. Bless our lives and make it useful for the building of the Kingdom. Amen

Response: “Spirit of Peace”

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRcraURz4&t=11s>)

(Encourage everyone to Dance)

Spirit of Peace, to your cause we give our strength
That love may reign and war may cease
Mir, miro, mir



Assignment for Next Sunday

Research and list down the Basic Human Rights based on the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the Philippine Bill of Rights.

Youth At Work. Monthly projects that involve the young people of the church.



The month of April: Resurrection of Jesus

4. Volunteer to help facilitate the Vacation Church School

5. Make a Parish Map

6. Conduct a seminar on how to make and facilitate Bible Study for young people.

4. #CYFSSlessoninlife. Post in your Twitter, FB, Instagram account the lessons you've learned from the session.

