

Lesson 46. What is the essence of the agreements and covenants that uphold human rights?

Third Sunday of Easter

April 18, 2021

General Concept: *The different agreements and covenants on human rights intend to safeguard and uphold the rights of those who cannot defend themselves.*

Biblical References: Psalms 8:4-9 & 82:3, Proverbs 31:8-9, and John 3:16

Age Level Concepts

- We have rights to defend.
- We uphold human rights as reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Philippine Bill of Rights.
- We work together to ensure the observance of human rights as stipulated in the document.

Learning Objectives

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

- Articulate our Human Rights and the rights of others
- Cite ways how to assert and defend our rights and uphold others' rights.
- Affirm the church's stand in upholding human rights as stipulated in the documents.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart/Powerpoint, offering plate or basket, Used Calendar for Sunday's Phrase, Memory Verse, Documents about Human Rights, UCCP Pastoral Statements On Human Rights, Philippine Constitution Article III, and gadgets for video presentation)

Biblical /Background Notes

“No Christian who reads the Bible and prays every day should miss the fact that the protection and promotion of human rights are central to the agenda of our biblical faith.” (Ferdinand Anno)

The United Church of Christ in the Philippines upholds the inviolability of the rights of persons as God's gift and will for all humanity. Jesus' missiological purpose is for all to have a meaningful and abundant life (John 10:10). Meaningful and abundant life is not about material accumulation and being ahead in the dragged race of capitalist commercialist “perfect world” but that all not just an individual or a group but all may experience abundant and meaningful life free from dehumanization, poverty, and powerlessness.

Throughout the biblical stories, Yahweh never ceases to uphold the rights of the poor and oppressed. The Exodus event opened up God's salvific act in freeing the people of Israel from bondage and oppression. God revealed God-self in the context of people's struggle for humanization, being free, and living an abundant and meaningful life for all. God's solidarity with those dehumanized people raised leaders, judges, and prophets to lead God's people to liberation freeing them from imperial bondage and national oppression under tyrannical rule. As

God God-self is vigilant in bringing God's people to a kinship living, we as God's people would always be vigilant in standing for our rights and the rights of others.

Documents about International Human Rights are engraved in our Philippines Constitution specifically found in Article III Bill of Rights section 1-22. Created after Martial Law, the leading revolutionaries intentionally and purposively imprinted the basic human rights of every person in our constitution so that never again that we Filipinos will experience such dehumanization and injustices of the Marcos Regime.

The UCCP has been vocal in adhering to the rights of the poor and oppressed especially our Lumad brothers and sisters. With such life-work, our church has currently under fire through the means of red-tagging, filling up unsubstantial criminal charges, and to the extreme, we have been targeted in the summary execution by the state. But despite all these, we continue to work as human rights workers for this is what Jesus Christ commanded us to do. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for, in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Mt 5:11-12)."

As a Church, we published Pastoral Letters to condemn injustices, dehumanization, militarization in the countryside, and oppression of the poor. With such letters circulated among churches, we continue to stand as one no matter what power hinders us to do so. We also stand together with partners and co-workers for peace, justice, and integrity with God's Creation in adhering to and protecting humanity's rights and creation's dignity. (Dr. Ferdinand Anno, BTR on Human Rights, Human Rights Week Celebration Guide 2020. <https://www.uccpchurch.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/HUMAN-RIGHTS-WEEK-CELEBRATION-GUIDE-2020.pdf>)

Psalms 8:4-9 & 82:3

Human beings are all important to God's sight. Though uniquely different from other creatures such uniqueness made humanity so special in God's sight. With special concern, God gave humans dominion not to rule over but to care for God's creation. Such power means to complement God's wondrous work and not for destroying and manipulating other creatures for one's benefit. The likeness/ image of God does not make us co-equal with our Creator but to be entrusted with the care, protection, and promotion of life to all creatures' well-being. Psalm 82:3 urged God's people to defend the poor and fatherless and do justice to the afflicted and needy. To defend means to fight for the rights of those who have no money to enter and carry on a suit, who have no friends to assist and advise them, and those who have no influence to carry justice and due process in the court of law. God's people are commanded to commit themselves to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. We believe in God who is the Parent of all parentless, great Judge of the widows, and Helper of the poor.

Proverbs 31:8-9

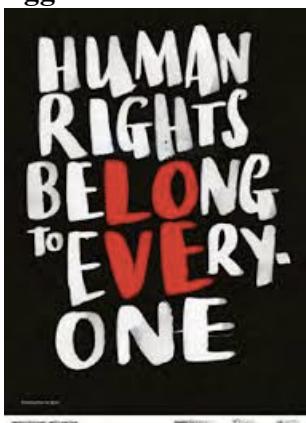
The wisdom literature is addressed to King Lemuel in the voice of his father. Because of our sinful nature, power and wealth tend to be corrupting influences. Earlier verses addressed the tendency of kings to overindulge in sex through the collecting of harems and thus being destroyed, a common problem among the Israelite kings (1 Kings 11:1-6). The book also addressed the

problem of drunkenness which cause the king to forget to provide justice to the poor and oppressed. God intends for the people in power to be a voice for the voiceless. One has to have the heart of God and the Spirit of God to know how to defend the rights of the poor and needy. To speak up for the poor and oppressed is our engraved accountability to God. We are called by God to be courageous, to stand up, and speak up for what is true and just for all.

John 3:16.

Considered as the center of the message of the bible, the passage demonstrates how God loves the world that God gave God's begotten of God's only son that whoever believes in him will have eternal life. Such love for the world embraces us to love not only humanity but the whole creation.

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 standing for the rights of others. What was the situation? How did she/he manage to speak up for the right of others?

Songs of Gathering "SPIRIT WHO BROODS"
HYMNAL OF FAITH JOURNEY, 185

SPIRIT WHO BROODS, SPIRIT WHO SINGS,
MOTHERING BIRD, PEACE IN YOUR WINGS
COME FROM WITHIN; COME, MAKE US ONE.
COME AND RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH,
FACE OF THE EARTH.



SPIRIT OF TRUTH, LASER AND LIGHT
SEARCHING THE PATH, SEEKING THE RIGHT.
COME FROM WITHIN; COME, MAKE US ONE.
COME AND RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH,
FACE OF THE EARTH.

SPIRIT OF LOVE, LARGER THAN LAW
QUICK TO FORGIVE, KEEPING NO SCORE.
COME FROM WITHIN; COME, MAKE US ONE.
COME AND RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH,

FACE OF THE EARTH.

Opening Prayer

God of justice and peace, we come before you to know more about your love for all of your creation. Teach us to seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you. In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.

Getting Ready



Showing a Video Ad Clip on Youtube about Human rights in two minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ew993Wdc0zo>)

1. What have you learned from this video clip?
2. How do you relate this video clip to our topic on *upholding human rights*?

Learning Time



Discovering the Biblical Truth.

Discuss to the class the biblical/background notes for this lesson. In the groups, assign a bible passage and let them answer the following questions.

Group 1- Psalms 8:4-9 & 82:3

Group 2- Proverbs 31:8-9

Group 3- John 3:16

1. *What does the passage talk about?*
2. *How does it connect with the issue on human rights?*
3. *How do you define human rights?*
4. *What do you think are the issues and concerns about the human rights situation in the Philippines?*
5. *What is the importance of human rights documents and how useful it is in defending your rights and the rights of others?*
6. *What is our Church's role in upholding the rights of humanity and for God's creation?*

Lessons Learned

Youth Reflect and Share!

In the group, assign them a document to study and make a brief presentation on how to educate young people about Human Rights.



Group 1: Philippine Constitution Article III.

(<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/constitutions/the-1987-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines/the-1987-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines-article-iii/>)

Group 2. UCCP Pastoral Statement: Woe to Those Who Make Unjust Laws, and Issue Oppressive Decrees, Statement on the Anti-Terrorism Law. February 4,2021,

<https://www.uccpchurch.com/woe-to-those-who-make-unjust-laws-and-issue-oppressive-decrees/>

Group 3. UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (art. 1),
adopted by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948.
(<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FactSheet2Rev.1en.pdf>)

Applying the Lessons Learned

Youth Speaks!

GROUP PRESENTATION. Encourage other groups to react and make suggestions on how to educate and nurture young people to be partners in upholding and defending human rights.

Closing Worship

Memory Verse:

“Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute.[a]
Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.” Proverbs 31:8-9

Offertory

Leader: Our gathering is a collective expression of our faith and life as God’s people.

Our offering of life and labor symbolizes our collective response to the
faithfulness and goodness of God. Let us then bring with joy and gratitude our
gifts and offerings.

DOXOLOGY

Hymnal of a Faith Journey, 94

Praise God, the Source of life and birth;
Praise God, the Word Who came to earth;
Praise God, the Spirit, Holy Flame,
All honor, glory to God’s name. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We bring our offerings to you O God with gratitude knowing that all that we receive
comes from You. Accept our gifts as our expression of our love to you. May these gifts
be useful in spreading your message of love to all. In Christ’s Name, Amen.

+Closing Song “Hymn of Human Rights”

(Tune: Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee)

For the healing of the nations, Lord, we pray with one accord,
For a just and equal sharing of the things the earth affords.
To a life of love in action, help us rise and pledge our word. (2x)

Lead us, dear God, into freedom, from despair your world release,
That redeemed from war and hatred, all may come and go in peace.
Show us through our care and goodness,

fear will die, and hope increase. (2x)

All that kills abundant living, let it from the earth be banned,
Pride of status, race or schooling, dogmas keeping work undone.
In our common quest for justice, may we hallow life's brief span? (2x)

You, Creator God, have written, Your great Name in humankind,
For our growing in Your likeness, brings the life of all to mind.
That by our response and service, the Kingdom of God we find. (2x)

+Prayer of Dedication (Closing Circle)

Facilitator: We commit ourselves to be God's instrument of protecting humanity and all creature's rights.

Learners: Yes, we are your instrument in upholding, preserving, and protecting all human and creature rights. Amen.

Response: "Spirit of Peace"

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

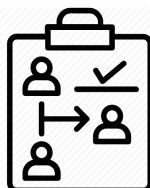
(Encourage everyone to Dance)

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 47. Why should the church protect, promote and enhance the ecological balance and integrity of creation?

Earth Day Celebration

Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 25, 2021

General Concept: The church protects, *promotes and enhances the ecological balance and integrity of creation because we are interwoven with God's whole creation.*

Biblical References: Colossians 1:16; Genesis 1, 2:15;

Age Level Concepts

- The church protects, *promotes, and enhances the ecological balance and integrity of creation*
- *We are interwoven with God's whole creation.*
- *We commit to engage in activities that promote the protection of God's creation.*

Learning Objectives

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

- Explain why the church needs to protect, promote, and enhance the ecological balance and integrity of God's creation.
- Draw a connection of how humans are interwoven with God's whole creation.
- Commit to engage in activities that promote the protection of God's creation

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

Biblical/Background Notes

The UCCP Statement of Faith stated that God provides order, purpose, meaning, and fulfillment to all creation. God gave us dominion not in terms of gaining profit, exploiting, and abusing all creation to satisfy our greed. God gave us dominion to be God's responsible stewards of all creatures. We are called to care, defend, and stand for the wellness of all creatures of the world. This is what Jesus means about experiencing abundant and meaningful life for all.

Colossians 1:16

Through Christ Jesus, all things were created, both heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-all things have been created through Him and for Him. The passage redefines God's creation as interconnected to the very plan and purpose of God as expressed in Christ Jesus. The plan is redemption not just for humanity but to the whole creation, the purpose is not just to live a life and die, but to live a life in abundance and meaningful life for all as interconnected and interrelated to other creatures.

Genesis 2:15

One of the most important lessons which we can draw out from this verse is that immediately after God created the whole creation, God gave humanity a God-given purpose to care for God's

creation. Humanity's existence engraved a purposive mission to work for caring and maintaining the well-being of the whole eco-system.

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 an experience of caring for God's creation.

Songs of Gathering

"Ang Lahat Ng Bagay Ay Magkaugnay" by Joey Ayala

Magkaugnay Lyrics

Lupa, laot, langit ay magkaugnay
Hayop, halaman, tao ay magkaugnay

CHORUS

Ang lahat ng bagay ay magkaugnay
Magkaugnay ang lahat

Tayo ay nakasakay sa mundong naglalakbay
Sa gitna ng kalawakan
Umiikot sa bituin na nagbibigay-buhay
Sa halaman, sa hayop at sa atin

CHORUS

Ang lahat ng bagay ay magkaugnay
Magkaugnay ang lahat

*
Isang pinagmulan
Isang hantungan ng ating lahi
Kamag-anak at katribo ang lahat ng narito
Sa lupa, sa laot at sa langit

CHORUS

Ang lahat ng bagay ay magkaugnay
Magkaugnay ang lahat

Lupa, laot, langit ay magkaugnay
Hayop, halaman, tao ay magkaugnay

CHORUS

Ang lahat ng bagay ay magkaugnay
Magkaugnay ang lahat

“We are Grateful O God”

by: Rev. Goel B. Bagundol

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0E4C34x_zI)

We are grateful O God for the sun, moon, and stars

For the dew of the morning delight

We are grateful O God for the mountains so high

And the rivers that flow into one

Chorus

Thank you God our creator, giver of love and all lives

Thank you for mercy, for caring, leading us all in your way

We are grateful O God for creation you made

For connecting us all in your place

We are grateful O God for uniqueness of face

That creates the rainbow of lives

We are grateful O God for salvation so free

For inviting us all in your fold

We are grateful O God for you called us today

To bring good news to all humankind.

Opening Prayer

God our great Creator, we praise you for the gift of life and love. May we learn more about your plan for your creation and our role as Your stewards. Amen.

Getting Ready



Showing a Video Clip on Youtube about Reverse Creation Bernard Backman.

1. What can you say about the film?

2. How do you relate this video clip from our topic this morning about caring for God's creation?

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth.



Discuss to the class the biblical/background notes for this lesson. Divide the class into two (2) groups. In the groups, assign a bible passage and let them answer the following questions.

Group 1-Colossians 1:16;

Group 2- Genesis 1, 2:15

1. *What does the passage talk about? How does it connect with the church's role in protecting, promoting, and enhancing the ecological balance and integrity of creation?*
2. *How do you explain humans' interconnectivity with other creatures?*
3. *How do we practice this connectivity in protecting, promoting, and enhancing the ecological balance and integrity of creation?*
4. *What is our Church's role in upholding, protecting, promoting, enhancing, and depending on God's creation? Cite your local church or CYF initiatives that express life-works and practices of good stewardship?*

Lessons Learned

Youth Reflect and Share!



In the group, assign them a document to study and make a brief presentation on how to involve an individual, family, church, and community toward a communal caring for God's creation?

Group 1: A RESOLUTION ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

General Assembly 21-26 May 1990

Group 2: A Statement of the Preservation of the Integrity of God's Creation.

General Assembly 21-26 May 1990

Applying the Lessons Learned

Youth Speaks!

GROUP PRESENTATION. Encourage other groups to react and make suggestions.

Closing Worship

Memory Verse:

“For in Him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers-all things have been created through Him.” Colossians 1:16

Offertory

Leader: Let us bring our gifts and offerings to our Creator God. Let us be joyful in giving our gifts for God's honor and praise.

Giving of Offering

”Creator of All Life”

(Tune: DOXOLOGY)

Creator of all life and birth

To you, we give our humblest gifts

May it will help to others' need

Grant us your blessings for us to share. Amen

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Accept our gifts O God as our expression of our love to you. May these offerings be of great use in our work for Your Creation. In Christ's Name, Amen.

+Closing Song

"This is Our Parent's World" [TYH 43]

This is our Parent's world, And to our listening ears,

All nature sings, and round us rings The music of the spheres.

This is our Parent's world: we rest us in the thought

Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas; God's hand the wonders wrought

This is our Parent's world, The birds their carols raise,

The morning light, the lily white, Declare their Maker's praise.

This is our Parent's world: God shines in all that's fair;

In the rustling grass we hear God pass, God speaks to us everywhere.

This is our Parent's world, O let us ne'er forget

That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet.

This is our Parent's world: The battle is not done;

Jesus who died shall be satisfied, And earth and heaven be one.

+Prayer of Dedication (Closing Circle)

Facilitator: We commit ourselves O God to be Your instruments of protecting, promoting, and enhancing the ecological balance and integrity of Your creation.

Learners: Yes, we are the good stewards of Your loving creation. Amen.

Response: "Spirit of Peace"

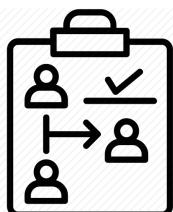
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRcraUReRz4&t=11s>)

(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

Make an Interview with a member of your Local Church's Board of Christian Educators. Ask the following questions;

- a. What is the role of the BCE in the life and work of the church?
- b. *Why do we nurture the faith of the people in the church?*
- c. *Evaluate how far are we now in nurturing the faith of our members?*

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



The month of April: Resurrection of Jesus

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2. Make a Parish Map
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- 4.#CYFSSlessoninlife. Post in your Twitter, FB, Instagram account the lessons you've learned from the session.

Appendix

A RESOLUTION ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNNS

General Assembly 21-26 May 1990

The General Assembly of the UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES (UCCP) under its theme for the forthcoming quadrennium 1990-1994. The Church for the Life of the World: Called to be Stewards of God's Creation met in Cebu. City on May 21-26, 1990, and studied the environmental destruction taking place around us.

WHEREAS, our beloved Philippines is threatened by the increasing degradation and destruction of our physical environment (land, water, air). We specifically deplore:

- a. the loss of our once verdant forests and mountain ranges through logging, destructive mining practices and unsuitable agricultural methods;
- b. the degradation of our farmlands through siltation, flooding and the deterioration of the water balance;
- c. the pollution of our urban areas and coastal waters through industrial wastes from outdated equipment and processes;
- d. the loss of coral reefs and other fishery resources.

WHEREAS, this degradation and destruction caused untold suffering to our rural and urban population, especially to industrial workers. They also destroyed people's lives and the bases of their livelihood from agriculture and fishing;

WHEREAS, this dramatic situation arises from the absence of a development policy which

- a. puts prime value to human life and social values of the Philippine community over materialistic approaches;

- b. exercises a choice of technologies that ensure sustainable production of natural resources;
 - c. makes Filipinos as the direct beneficiaries of products and services from the motherland;

WHEREAS, the dramatic population increase of today quickly leads to a depletion or overutilization of our natural resources;

WHEREAS, we deplore the decline in our relationship with nature, that sometimes result in a violent and destructive approach to environmental life around us;

WHEREAS, we have witnessed and suffered the effects of such destruction, which if left unattended, will result in even greater national disaster;

WHEREAS, given this reality as a Church for the Life of the World and as Stewards of God's Creation, we are called upon to be vigilant to defend God's creation, if not for us then for our children and their children;

THEREFORE, be it resolved, as it is hereby resolved, that the General Assembly of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) encourage the entire constituency to:

1. undertake a vigorous campaign educating our people on the root causes of such destruction and suffering;
2. formulate development policies which consider the principles evoked above and giving due consideration to such issues like rational land use, genuine land reform, forest land reform, and formulate such plans and programs for all levels of the life of the Church, through a process of research and consultation;
3. support the call for a total logging ban in the country for the next 25 years in order to replenish our rapidly diminishing forest reserves;
4. formulate an action program for the coming quadrennium 1990-1994 with, among others, the following components:
 - a. activities designed to support those government programs, i.e. those of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, judged to be capable of improving and protecting the natural resources;
 - b. a massive tree planting program throughout the country and throughout the quadrennium;
 - c. the organization of survey teams to speed up the process of land titling for landless farmers presently undertaken by the DENR and the DAR;
 - d. a project to study and change the UCCP's own programs, projects, actions and operations with the aim of making them environmentally sound and sustaining;

APPROVED and ADOPTED by the Fourth Quadrennial General Assembly of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines this 26th day of May, 1990, in Cebu City, Philippines.

**A Statement of the Preservation of the Integrity of God's Creation
General Assembly 21-26 May 1990**

"And God saw everything He has made and behold it was good."
(Genesis 1:31)

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein." (Psalm 24:1)

We, the Church leaders, officers of and delegates to the Fourth Quadrennial General Assembly of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), meeting in plenary session on May 26, 1990 at Cebu City, discussed and made this statement on the preservation of the integrity of creation.

THE BIBLICAL BASIS

The Scriptures remind us of the timeless truth that God, the Sovereign Maker, created the heavens, the earth and all things therein. God declared His creation as very good. Moreover, God created man and woman in His own image. He entrusted to them the care and protection of all that He has made: land, seas, air, water, birds, beasts, plants and all creeping, living and even inanimate things. He charged man and woman to till the land and keep it. In other words, God made human beings stewards of His good and beautiful creation. The Bible tells us that human beings accepted this responsibility when they recognized God as the Lord of their lives and of history.

THE REAL SITUATION

Human beings failed miserably as stewards. Through indifference and neglect or through deliberate, inconsiderate and greedy decisions, they defaced and destroyed the earth to enhance personal profits at the expense of God's good and beautiful creation. Through their lust to possess and to amass for themselves the wealth and bounty of the earth, mixed with total abandon and disregard for the welfare of creation, human beings committed disastrous acts, such as:

- a. In the mining industry, for example the Benguet Open Pit Mining, thoughtless of consequences, intensified the adverse and destructive effects on the rivers, forests, mountains and on the people and living creatures near the mining site. Likewise, other mining companies operating in other parts of the country contributed to the grave pollution and destruction of the environment.
- b. The logging industry resorted to and abetted the indiscriminate and illegal cutting of trees. These caused the rapid disappearance of our forests and denudation of our mountains. When the rains came, rivers swelled into floods that inundated farms and towns. When dry season came, the rivers, lakes, streams and springs dried up. Rain or shine, people suffered.
- c. Industrialized farming encouraged the use of inorganic fertilizers and commercial pesticides by both big and small farmers. This caused adverse side-effects on the fertility of the land and on the health of the people.
- d. The presence and active operation of about one thousand (1,000) foreign multinational corporations throughout the land make them as the principal cause of the acute pollution of many of our rivers, lakes, seas, air, population centers and environs. They also serve as concrete vestiges of foreign domination and control of our economy and sovereignty.
- e. The general pollution of our environment may cause the destruction of the ozone layer, a covering that protects the earth from intense heat or ultra violet rays from the sun. Exacerbate this with the destruction of forests to pave the way for the greenhouse effect — the warning of global temperature to such an extent that earthly life may not be able to bear it.

THE CALL

The UCCP General Assembly has set forth the following challenges and calls to:

1. Every Farmer/Individual

- a. To use organize fertilizers and pesticides in farming and gardening, in order to preserve the fertility of the land and to avoid side effects harmful to people's health.
- b. To adopt SALT (Sloping Agricultural Land Technology) method in farming, an appropriate way to cultivate mountains and hills that prevents soil erosion and promotes land fertility.
- c. To challenge individual Christians to live and practice seriously his/her stewardship of God's creation and to combat all forces that desecrate God's earth.

2. Local Churches and Communities

- a. To strongly support the proposal to enforce a policy on total logging ban for twenty-five years.
- b. To support the government's plant-a-tree program by starting a small scale but systematic reforestation project beginning with land owned by the local church or by church members.
- c. To conduct a massive education program, in cooperation with governmental and non-governmental agencies concerning stewardship of God's creation. The program will avail of all study materials produced

by the NCCP and UCCP for use by the church constituency, as well as by the community, at large.

3. The Government: Local and National

- a. To give serious and immediate attention to the problem of pollution and the destruction of forests and trees by investing more money and resources for the restoration, development, preservation, and protection of our natural resources;
- b. To institute a policy on total logging ban for at least twenty-five (25) years in order to foster a faster restoration of denuded and eroded mountains and hills.

DONE and APPROVED by the Fourth Quadrennial General Assembly of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) on May 26th, 1990 at Cebu City, Philippines.

Lesson 48. Why do we nurture the faith of the people in the church?

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 2, 2021

General Concept: *Nurturing the faith of the believers is one of the primary responsibilities of the church to equip them in their faith and witness.*

Biblical References: *Matthew 28: 18-20; Deuteronomy 6:3-8; 2 Timothy 3:14-17;*

Age Level Concepts

- *Nurturing the faith of the believers is one of the primary responsibilities of the church to equip them in their faith and witness.*
- *We commit to take part in the nurturing ministry of the church.*

Learning Objectives

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

- Explain the importance of nurturing the faith of the believers as a primary responsibility of the church.

- Identify ways of nurturing the faith of the believers especially the young people in one's local church.
- Commit to taking part in the nurturing ministry of 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, Memory Verse, and gadgets for video presentation)

Biblical/Background Notes

Christian nurturing begins from womb to tomb and culminates from resurrection to life eternal living. Such missiological task directs the life work of Christianity to “Kingdom living”. Nurturing believers as a primary responsibility of the church aims to live out their faith in Jesus Christ as a community of faith. Nurturing promotes the knowledge of one's being, doing one's calling, and defining a transformative community based on God's purpose and plan for the world.

Matthew 28:18-20

Known as the “Great Commission” of Jesus to his disciples. It defines the purpose and calling of every follower or believer of Christ Jesus. It is a commandment from Jesus himself of how his disciples ought to live. There are three distinct points about the purpose of how we are to grow God's kingdom. First, “*Go and make disciples*”. It involves going out from its comfort zone and go out to the unknowing and find people to nurture. Nurturing for the multiplication of the disciples is the purposive task of this point. Second, is to “*Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*”. Nurturing promotes understanding of one's faith in Jesus Christ, owning and experiencing God's amazing grace, and eventually come into a lifelong commitment of making Christ Jesus one's Savior and Lord of one's life. Lastly, “*teach*” them about the life and work of Jesus, life work and traditions of Christian believers, and modeling to live a life in Christ Jesus. We teach others so that others may also be Christ's disciples who will make themselves more disciples. (Connie Rowland, What Is the Purpose of Life? Master's Hand Collection. February 17, 2020. Bible Study, Christian Life.)

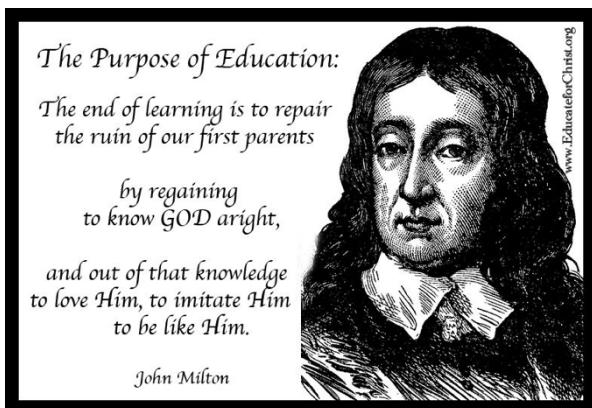
Deuteronomy 6:3-8

Known as “Shema” Hear O Israel... As God's commandments promote how to live life to the fullest, nurturing is a vital role of God's people to their children and their children's children. As God's people grow in number from one generation to another, teaching such commandments from God must be handed on and thoroughly imparted and engraved in day-to-day living. The Fear of God in the heart will be the most powerful principle of obedience. Not we only, but to the upcoming generations should fear the Lord. (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/deuteronomy/6-3.htm>)

2 Timothy 3:14-17

Paul drew a strong contrast between the worldly, wicked behaviors or false teachers, and the conduct Timothy has seen from him. Teaching by living an example is the method of Paul's nurturing imparted to Timothy his protege. Paul strongly taught Timothy about the Scriptures' value to one's growth and maturity. All Scripture is breathed out by God, where God can be heard speaking, teaching, reproofing, correcting, and equipping for every good work. All Scripture from

Old to New Testament is profitable for us to be equipped and competent in doing God's mission and work. (Morgan, Bryce. God is Speaking to You. <https://www.wayofgracechurch.com/sermons/sermon/2010-02-07/god-is-speaking-to-you---ii-timothy-3:14-17->)



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 answer the question, "What life's lesson made an impact on your life that you wanted to share for the rest of your life?"

Songs of Gathering

" HE'S MY ROCK "

He's my rock, my sword, my shield
He's the hole in the middle of the wind
He's the lily of the valley
He's the bright and shining star
I don't care what people say
I've got on my knees and pray
I'm gonna sing until my Jesus comes again..YEAH HAH!



"Together in God's Family" - GBB

(Tune: Jesus is the Way)

I'm part of you and you're part of me,
together in God's family 3x
We're living together in God's household

Opening Prayer

As we gather here as one family, may You nurture us O God to be your people who live out the life of light and love. May Your Spirit strengthen, restore, and inspire us with Your love and compassion. We ask these in Jesus, our Savior, and Lord. Amen.

Getting Ready

Allow a member of the Board of Christian Educators to share their life work in the Local Church. Encourage the learners to ask questions.



Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth.



Discuss to the class the biblical background for 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-*Matthew 28: 18-20*

Group 2- *Deuteronomy 6:3-8*

Group 3: *2 Timothy 3:14-17, 2:15*

1. *What does the passage talk about? How does it connect with the church's role in nurturing its members to do Christ's mission?*
2. *Enumerate and evaluate the nurturing program of one's local church. Identify its purposes and outputs?*
3. *Suggest and develop a youth nurturing program of activities that would be relevant today to catch the interest of the young people in one's local Church.*

Lessons Learned

Youth Evaluates and Reflect! Within the same groups, tell them to fill in the graph trying to evaluate the current educational and nurturing programs of the church for the young people.

Activities	SCRAP or CONTINUE?	How to make it more interesting to the young people today?
1. Bible Study		
2. Sunday School		
3. Retreats		
4. Camps/ Fellowship		
5. Sermon/Preaching		

Applying the Lessons Learned

Youth Speaks!



Call a representative of each group to say something about the nurturing program of one's local church. Solicit the opinion of the class whether they want to scrap it out or give suggestions on how to improve the program.

Closing Worship

Memory Verse:

“18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”[a]” Matthew 28:18-20

Offertory

Leader: In Exodus 35:4-5, Moses said to the congregation of the people of Israel, ‘This is the thing that the Lord has commanded. Take from among you a contribution to the Lord. Whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the Lord’s contribution.’ Let us now give our offerings to God.

Giving of Offerings

Creator of All Life
(Tune: DOXOLOGY)
Creator of all life and birth
To you, we give our humblest gifts
May it will help to others' need
Grant us your blessings for us to share. Amen

Prayer of Thanksgiving

To You, we offer our offerings of thanksgiving O God. May it be of great use for the life and work of Your Church. This we offer in Christ's Name, Amen.

We want to learn to live in love,
To follow what is good and true;
Through friends at church at home at play,
We find what God would have us do.

When we are sad or feeling mean,
and fail to love or to be fair;
Our friends at church, at home, at play,
Can help us know that God does care

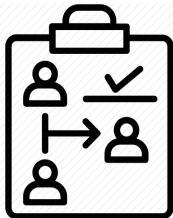
When others are unkind to us,
and make us want to cry or fight;
We can reach out to be good friends,
And help them know that love is right.

+Prayer of Dedication (Closing Circle)

All: We commit ourselves O God to learn more about you and to learn more about how to love others. May your Holy Spirit help us to do so. Amen.

Response: Siyahamba: A Worship Jam
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9QtRb1kx7Y>)
Siyahamb' ekukah nyen kwenei quen khos.
Siyahamb' Siyahamb, Siyahamb ekukah neyn kwenei quen khos
(We are walking in the light of God. We are walking in the light of God.)

Assignment for Next Sunday



Research on the topic of Local Church Autonomy.



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

- The month of May: UCCP Anniversary
1. Volunteer to help facilitate the Community Pantry
 2. Make Update of one's Local Church History
 3. Conduct a seminar on "Church Digital Ministry".
 - 4.#CYFSSlessoninlife. Post in your Twitter, FB, Instagram account the lessons you've learned from the session.

Lesson 49. What does “autonomy of the Local Church” mean?

Mother’s Sunday

Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 09,2021

General Concept: *Autonomy of the Local Church means the right of the local church to freely conduct its ministry and mission yet ensures that the unity of the church is sustained.*

Biblical References: Ephesians 4: 14-16; 1 Corinthians 12: 12-14; Galatians 5:13; Psalm 119: 45; 1 Peter 2: 16

Age Level Concepts

- Autonomy of the Local Church means the right of the local church to freely conduct its ministry and mission yet ensures that the unity of the church is sustained.
- Our church can freely and creatively express its life-work and mission provided that it is within the church's governance.
- We recognize that the local church's life and work are an integral part of the whole UCCP.

- We help ensure that the unity of the church is sustained.

Learning Objectives

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

- Explain and give an example of how the Local Church Autonomy is being expressed
- Demonstrate how a local church can freely and creatively express its life-work.
- Draw a connection of the local church's life and work to the ministry and programs of the whole UCCP.
- Commit to working for the sustainability of the local church's autonomy.

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

Biblical/Background Notes

Autonomy is defined as the right or condition of self-government. An agent can act following an objective morality rather than under the influence of desires. (Google Dictionary, <https://www.google.com/search?q=autonomy+meaning&oq=autonomy&aqs=chrome2.69i57j0l9.5306j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>). It defines one's creativity and uniqueness in living as an individual and as a community.

As the local church is the primary locus of God's mission, the UCCP upholds the autonomy of the Local Church particularly as to its right and power to conduct its ministry free from outside control, provided the same is in line with the Constitution, By-Laws, and statutes of the Church, thereby enabling the Local Church to become an effective instrument in the ministry and mission of the Church and ensuring its positive contribution to the unity and strengthening of the whole Church. (UCCP Amended By-Laws Article 3 section 27). The autonomy of the local church contextualized Christ's ministry and mission to one's community where the church is located. It makes the message of Christ Jesus palatable to the locals and highlights the tradition and life's culture of the people's spirituality. Though each local church is free it doesn't have the right to undermine other local churches and other jurisdictional bodies.

Ephesians 4: 14-16.

God gave gifts to the believers for the task of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry and also for the building up of the body of Christ. This will aim to work out until all will attain or in the Greek word "Katantao" which means arriving at one's destination. For Paul, the goal is in equipping is the building up of the body of Christ. As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Maturity in Christ Jesus is the goal of every believer who surrendered to the Word. People who die daily to themselves, are obedient to what God says and are walking by faith, experience the living presence of the fullness of Christ. We are to be no longer children that are tossed here and there by waves. All are to grow and be matured in one's faith in Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 12: 12-14.

Paul explained that there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences in ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. There are 9 spiritual gifts mentioned, diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. Though gifts may differ from each other, the Holy Spirit's purpose is to build up the whole body of Christ to do God's mission.

Galatians 5:13

The passage focuses on what those in Christ should do with our freedom in Christ. One has to guard it especially from those who would pressure us to follow the law. Paul was confident the Galatians would resist the one leading them in the wrong direction. Paul also warns us not to waste our freedom in Christ to selfishly serve ourselves instead of serving each other in love. The entire law is fulfilled in that one word: love. Those who serve themselves, though, will always end up in conflict with each other. (Bible Reference. (<https://www.bibleref.com/Galatians/5/Galatians-5-13.html>)

Psalm 119: 45.

To walk at liberty means walking in the open square of a city, hence a wide, open, free space. In obeying God's commandments the psalmist will not feel oneself under constraint, but a wholly free agent. For one seek God's precepts. Inclination, not a constraint, makes him obey God's precepts- seeking and loving God. (Bible Hub. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/psalms/119-45.htm>)

Suggested Lesson Outline

Greeting Time

**Our Liberty Is Not the
Right To Do As We Please,
But the Opportunity To
Please To Do What Is Right**



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 answer the question, "What does autonomy mean to you?"

Songs of Gathering "Behold What Manner of Love"
*Behold what manner of love God-
Parent has given unto us.)2x
That we shall be called the children of God
That we shall be called the children of God.*

*“This is the Day”
This is the day that Lord has made,
We will rejoice and be glad in it.)2x
Rejoice in the Lord 2x*

Opening Prayer

Sentence Prayer: “O God our Parent, I am grateful for _____” (Let all learners supply and complete the sentence prayer.)

Getting Ready

Allow learners to share their assignment about Local Church Autonomy.

Allow 2-5 learners to share their work.



Learning Time



Discovering the Biblical Truth

Discuss to the class the biblical/background notes for today's lesson. Assign a bible passage to the groups and ask the following questions:

Group 1- *Ephesians 4: 14-16 & 1 Corinthians 12: 12-14*

Group 2-*Galatians 5:13; Psalm 119: 45*

1. *What does the passage talk about?*
2. *How should a body function?*
3. *In what ways can a church express its autonomy?*
2. *How does it connect with the topic on local church autonomy? Explain in your own words and give an example of what we mean about local church autonomy.*

Lessons Learned

Divide the class into two groups. Instruct them to fill in the acronym AUTONOMY using the points/questions below as guide:

- How does church autonomy work for a local church? In what way does your local church practice local autonomy?
- Suggest ways on how to practice local church autonomy yet being mindful of the whole UCCP laws as stipulated in its Constitution and By-Laws
- Identify Local Church's practices and traditions that are uniquely found in your local church?

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Applying the Lessons Learned



Youth Speaks! Allow each group to report to the whole class about what transpired during their discussion. Encourage the class to participate and move them to appreciate the importance of Local Church Autonomy.

Closing Worship

Memory Verse:

“I shall walk at liberty, for I have sought your precepts.” - Psalms 119:45

Offertory

Leader: In Acts 20:35 it says that “in everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” Let us now give our offerings for the life and love of the Church.

Giving of Offerings

Response in Song of Thanksgiving

“Dear Lord God, Receive Our Offering” Hymnal of Faith Journey,96

Dear Lord God receive these offerings

We are bringing to your altar

For you O God our fount of blessings

From your great love, outpouring, flowing

Because you have loved us so much from the very beginning

and you made all things on earth for us,

And so our lives to you we offer

O Lord, our God, in service for the world

+Closing Song

You Are Salt for the Earth” Hymnal of Faith Journey,246

You are salt for the earth, O people,
salt for the kingdom of God!

Share the flavor of life, O people,
Life in the Kingdom of God

Refrain

Bring forth the kingdom of mercy,

Bring forth the kingdom of peace.
Bring forth the kingdom of justice,
Bring forth the city of God!

You are the light on the hill,
O people, light for the city of God!
Shine so holy and bright O people;
Shine for the kingdom of God! (Refrain)

You are a seed of the word, O people,
bring forth the kingdom of God!
Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice,
Grow in the kingdom of God! (Refrain)

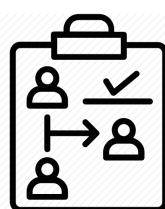
We are bless'd and a pilgrim people,
Bound for the kingdom of God!
Love our journey and love our homeland,
Love is the kingdom of God!(Refrain)

+Prayer of Dedication (Closing Circle)

All: We commit ourselves O God to work creatively as your church is called to serve the community where our Church is located. We promise to let your gospel of love, hope, and peace be transmitted to the very least, lost, and last of our society. We entrust ourselves to your empowerment that we can do what you want us to do. In Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen.

Response: Siyahamba: A Worship Jam
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9QtRb1kx7Y>)

Siyahamb' ekukah nyen kwenei quen khos.
Siyahamb' Siyahamb, Siyahamb ekukah neyn kwenei quen khos
(We are walking in the light of God. We are walking in the light of God.)



Assignment for Next Sunday

Research on the scope of Local Church Autonomy. Read and digest the UCCP Amended By-Laws Article III section 27.



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

The month of May: UCCP Anniversary

1. Volunteer to help facilitate the Community Pantry
2. Make Update of one's Local Church History
3. Conduct a seminar about Church Digital Ministry.
- 4.#CYFSSlessoninlife. Post in your Twitter, FB, Instagram account the lessons you've learned from the session.

Appendix

Declaration of Principles

Section 14. Consistent with the heritage and commitment of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, the autonomy of the Local Church shall be respected. The scope of such autonomy shall be defined in the By-Laws. Amended By-Laws of UCCP Article III The Local Church

UCCP Amended By Laws Article 3 Section 27

Section 27. Scope of Local Autonomy. The primary locus of mission is the Local Church. Hence, the UCCP upholds the autonomy of the Local Church particularly as to its right and power to conduct its ministry free from outside control, provided the same is in line with the Constitution, By-Laws and statutes of the Church, thereby enabling the Local Church to become an effective instrument in the ministry and mission of the Church and ensuring its positive contribution to the unity and strengthening of the whole Church. Specifically, autonomy of the Local Church includes the authority to do the following:

a. To call and support its Pastor and other Church workers, keeping in mind the basic policy of the Church to call to its ministry pastors and Church workers belonging to the UCCP, subscribing to the UCCP Statement of Faith and paying allegiance to the Constitution, By-Laws and statutes of the Church. Pastors, ministers and workers of other churches affiliated with the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) may be requested to serve in the Local Church with the prior written permission of the General Assembly or the National Council, through the General Secretary; (As Amended by NC 2002-30, Condora, Damortis, La Union, Oct. 23-26, 2002) **A m e n d e d C o n s t i t u t i o n a n d B y - L a w s , M a g n a C a r t a f o r C h u r c h W o r k e r s a n d J u r i s p r u d e n c e**

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b. To administer, maintain, encumber or dispose of its personal or real properties pursuant to a resolution of its Board of Trustees and approved by its Church Council and, where real properties are involved, with the written consent of the General Assembly or the National Council, through the General Secretary;

c. To invite pastors, ministers, workers and lay leaders of other churches to speak, preach or otherwise enter into fellowship with the Local Church, from time to time, in consonance with Article II, Section 7, of the Constitution, and the Policy on Ecumenical Relations issued in 1986, provided that the authority and integrity of the UCCP, as well as the unity

of the Local Church, shall never be impaired or compromised; (As Amended by NC Action 2015-50, UCCP Magugpo Cathedral, Tagum City, August 21, 2015)

d. To nominate and elect its officers, in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws, and hold annual and such special meetings as it may deem necessary and proper;

e. To admit qualified persons into the membership of the Local Church, help ensure their nurture and spiritual development, and promote and develop among them the idea of loving service, stewardship and missionary outreach;

f. To celebrate its worship services that are orderly and solemn, yet joyful and meaningful, reflective of the faith and life of the Church and responsive to the needs of the community in terms of witness, service and prophetic ministry;

g. To support the ministerial and lay formation program of the Church and recruit, recommend and support candidates for the ministry.

h. To adopt its own budget and financial program and fulfill its obligations to the wider bodies; and,

i. To do all things as it may deem wise, necessary and proper, without encroaching on the prerogatives of, and interfering with, the wider Church bodies, ensuring at all times that its action contribute to the unity and strengthening of the whole UCCP. (UCCP Amended Constitution and By-Laws. https://uccpchurch.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/final-uccp_cbl.pdf)

Lesson 50. What is the scope of the autonomy of the Local Church?

Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 16, 2021

General Concept: The scope of the Local Church's autonomy is stipulated in the Constitution and By-Laws Article 3, section 28.

Biblical References: *Psalm 25: 8-10; Deuteronomy 11:1; John 15:14; John 14:15; Exodus 15:26; Romans 5:19*

Age Level Concepts

- The scope of the Local Church's autonomy is stipulated in the Constitution and By-Laws Article 3, section 27.
- Understanding the scope and limitation of the local church's autonomy is essential to all church members
- We abide by the provisions of the church's Constitution and By-Laws and help ensure its implementation.

Learning Objectives

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

- Explain the scope of Local Church's autonomy as stipulated in the UCCP Amended By-Laws Article 3, section 27.
- Point out the importance of understanding the scope and limitation of the Local Church's autonomy by all members

- Commit to abide by the provisions about local autonomy as found in the UCCP Amended Constitution and By-Laws.

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

Biblical/Background Notes

“Personal freedom ends where another's safety begins.” It refers to the boundary where one can act but has to stop when it approaches the boundary of another. It is about the demarcation of liberties of an individual to the next individual. We each have our own space and there is a boundary. So also with our Local Church’s Autonomy where there are restrictions or limitation on one’s autonomy to secure the basic lifework, heritage, and tradition of our Church. It aims for protecting the whole UCCP Church’s unity and harmony as a National and integral Church.

In the UCCP Amended By-Laws Article III Section 27 which stated the Scope of Local Autonomy. It defines the autonomy of the Local Church which includes the authority to do the following:

a. To call and support its Pastor and other Church workers, keeping in mind the basic policy of the Church to call to its ministry pastors and Church workers belonging to the UCCP, subscribing to the UCCP Statement of Faith and paying allegiance to the Constitution, ByLaws, and statutes of the Church. Pastors, ministers, and workers of other churches affiliated with the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) may be requested to serve in the Local Church with the prior written permission of the General Assembly or the National Council, through the General Secretary; (As Amended by NC 2002-30, Condor, Damortis, La Union, Oct. 23-26, 2002) A m e n d e d C o n s t i t u t i o n a n d B y - L a w s , M a g u g p o C a t h e d r a l f o r C h u r c h W o r k e r s a n d J u r i s p r u d e n c e

b. To administer, maintain, encumber or dispose of its personal or real properties pursuant to a resolution of its Board of Trustees and approved by its Church Council and, where real properties are involved, with the written consent of the General Assembly or the National Council, through the General Secretary;

c. To invite pastors, ministers, workers and lay leaders of other churches to speak, preach or otherwise enter into fellowship with the Local Church, from time to time, in consonance with Article II, Section 7, of the Constitution, and the Policy on Ecumenical Relations issued in 1986, provided that the authority and integrity of the UCCP, as well as the unity of the Local Church, shall never be impaired or compromised; (As Amended by NC Action 2015-50, UCCP Magugpo Cathedral, Tagum City, August 21, 2015)

d. To nominate and elect its officers, in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws, and hold annual and such special meetings as it may deem necessary and proper;

- e. *To admit qualified persons into the membership of the Local Church*, help ensure their nurture and spiritual development, and promote and develop among them the idea of loving service, stewardship and missionary outreach;
- f. *To celebrate its worship services that are orderly and solemn, yet joyful and meaningful, reflective of the faith and life of the Church and responsive to the needs of the community in terms of witness, service and prophetic ministry;*
- g. *To support the ministerial and lay formation program of the Church and recruit, recommend and support candidates for the ministry.*
- h. *To adopt its own budget and financial program and fulfill its obligations to the wider bodies; and,*
- i. *To do all things as it may deem wise, necessary and proper, without encroaching on the prerogatives of, and interfering with, the wider Church bodies, ensuring at all times that its action contribute to the unity and strengthening of the whole UCCP. (UCCP Amended Constitution and By-Laws. https://uccpchurch.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/final-uccp_cbl.pdf)*

Psalm 25: 8-10

King David in this psalm declared the goodness of God. God's goodness to the humble moved God to teach them of God's ways and guides them to do justice. God's ways are at times like heavy wagon tracks, and they cut deep into our souls, yet they are all of mercy and love. In place of Local Church Autonomy, the ways of declaring and living out God's goodness varied from different local churches. The ways may differ but it has the foundation of God's mercy and love. The autonomy of the local church must not be separated from the very core and nature of the UCCP. It should align always with God's way. (Bible Hub.<https://biblehub.com/commentaries/psalms/25-8.htm>)

Deuteronomy 11:1

God commanded Israel to love God. It is a commitment to take, a choice that one must take. Why do we love God? It is because of God's steadfast love for people who redeemed them from the bondage of Egypt, who provided all their needs, and made them a people who has a land of their own and a government under God - Theocracy. Autonomy is God's gift to the people to creatively express their responses to God's goodness and living out their love to God. (Enduring Word, <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/deuteronomy-11/>)

John 15:14

Continuing Jesus' intimate conversation with his disciples, Jesus expressed this concern to them. They are considered His friends if they do what he commanded them to do. He then humbled himself and washed the disciples' feet and said: "a new command I give unto you that you love one another in the same way that I have loved you. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples- my friends." (Knowing Jesus, <https://dailyverse.knowing-jesus.com/john-15-14>)

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 answer the question, "What keeps you alive each day?"

Songs of Gathering



"Enter Rejoice and Come in "
Enter rejoice and come in
Open your hearts to the Lord
Today will be a joyful day
Enter rejoice and come in.

Gather us all in Your love, gather us all in Your love;
That we may all be one body, gather us all in Your love.

Sing alleluia to the Lord, sing alleluia to the Lord
Today will be a joyful day,sing alleluia to the Lord

"I Have the Joy"

I Have the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy,
Down in my heart, down in my heart, Down in my heart,
I have the joy, joy, joy, joy, Down in my heart to stay.

I have the peace that passes understanding, Down in my heart, down in my heart,
Down in my heart, I have the peace that passes understanding,
Down in my heart to stay.

I have the love of Jesus, love of Jesus, Down in my heart, down in my heart, Down in my heart,
I have the love of Jesus, love of Jesus,
Down in my heart, Down in my heart to stay.

For there is therefore now no condemnation,
Down in my heart, down in my heart, Down in my heart,
For there is therefore now no condemnation, Down in my heart to day.

Opening Prayer

Sentence Prayer: "O God we thank you for _____" (Let all learners supply and complete the sentence prayer.)

Getting Ready



Allow learners to react to the saying, “Personal freedom ends where another’s safety begins.”



Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Discuss to the class the biblical/background notes including the scope of the Local Church Autonomy. Divide the class into three (3) group as and assign a bible passage to each.

- Group 1-*Psalm 25: 8-10 (Scope a- c);*
- Group 2: *Deuteronomy 11:1 (Scope: d to f);*
- Group 3: *John 15:14 (Scope g-l)*

Ask the following questions:

1. What does the passage talk about?
2. How does it connect with the topic about the scope of the church’s autonomy? Explain and give an example of the assigned scope.
3. What are the pros and cons of Local Church autonomy?

Lessons Learned

Youth Reflects!

Let each group fill the graph and be part of the reporting.

<i>ADVANTAGE</i>	<i>DISADVANTAGE</i>

After the sharing, ask the following:

- How does the provision from the Amended UCCP By-Laws Article 3 section 27 able to guard the unity and harmony of the church?
- *What are the practices and traditions that are uniquely found in your local church?*

Applying the Lessons Learned



Youth Speaks Out! Encourage the learners to share their comments and opinions as to how can the Church ensure that unity is preserved despite the autonomy given to the local churches.

Closing Worship

Memory Verse

Good and upright is the Lord;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
9 He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.

10 All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

Psalm 25:8-10 NRSV

Offertory

Leader: In Hebrews 13:16 says, “And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” Let us share to make God happy.

Giving of Offerings

Response in Song of Thanksgiving “To Others Share Your Many Gifts”
Hymnal of Faith Journey,299

To others share your many gifts,
To God Creator offer now your life in willing service true,
To God who owns the earth to offer is to share,
To share your gifts to those who need your joy and loving care
So share your gifts to all.

+Closing Song “Once to Everyone and Nation”
(Tune: *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*)

Once to every one and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of truth and falsehood, for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, God’s new endeavor, offering each the bloom or blight
And the choice goes by forever between darkness and God’s light.

New occasions bring new duties, making bloom or blight obsolete,
Christ’s commission makes one decide, truth great cause may bring profit,
Then it is the brave, who chooses; while the coward stands aside,
Till the multitude makes virtue of the faith they had denied.

Though the cause of evil prosper, yet ‘tis truth alone is strong;
False forever on the gallows, truth forever on the throne,
Yet that gallows sway the future, and behind the dim unknown,
God is standing in the shadow keeping watch beside God’s own.

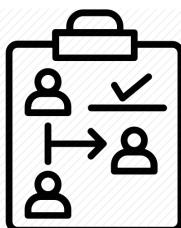
+Prayer of Dedication (Closing Circle)

All: We commit to you our God our commitment to uphold your status and obey your commands. Use us to be the light and salt of the earth. In Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen.

Response: Siyahamba: A Worship Jam
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9QtRb1kx7Y>

Siyahamb' ekukah nyen kwenei quen khos.

Siyahamb' Siyahamb, Siyahamb ekukah neyn kwenei quen khos
(We are walking in the light of God. We are walking in the light of God.)



Assignment for Next Sunday

Make a two-minute tik-tok video on how you are so blessed by Sunday School Class. This will serve as an invitation for other young people to attend the Sunday School Class for the Youth.



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

The month of May: UCCP Anniversary

1. Volunteer to help facilitate the Community Pantry
2. Make Update of one's Local Church History
3. Conduct a seminar about Church Digital Ministry.
- 4.#CYFSSlessoninlife. Post in your Twitter, FB, Instagram account the lessons you've learned from the session.

Evaluation Session

Pentecost Sunday

May 23, 2021

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES Laity and Local Church Development Ministries Christian Education and Nurture

Survey on UCCP Sunday School Guide

1. Are you using the UCCP Sunday School Materials?			
	YES		NO
2. What Sunday School Lessons have you finished since 2018?			
	On UCCP Statement of Faith		On UCCP Declaration of Principles
	On UCCP Vision, Mission and Goal		
3. Briefly, please provide us your feedbacks on our Sunday School Materials? (Strengths and Weaknesses)			
4. Please give us your suggestion:			
5. Do you conduct a regular Sunday School teachers' meeting?			
	YES		NO
6. How regular is your meeting?			
	Once a month		Twice a year
	Quarterly		

	<p>Others: (Please specify)</p>
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