



Community of Christ

COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS

YOUTH

9 SEPTEMBER 2018 — 25 NOVEMBER 2018

COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS



Lifelong Disciple Formation in Community of Christ is the shaping of persons in the likeness of Christ at all stages of life. It begins with our response to the grace of God in loving community and continues as we help others learn, grow, and serve in the mission of Jesus Christ. Ultimately, discipleship is expressed as one lives the mission initiatives of the church through service, generosity, witness, and invitation.

We invite you to use these lessons for your class, group, or congregation.

Lectionary-based: The weekly lessons connect the *Revised Common Lectionary* for worship with Community of Christ identity, mission, message, and beliefs.

Quick, easy: The lessons are designed for approximately 45-minute class sessions with two to three pages of ideas, discussion starters, and activities. Additional preparation help may be found in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament* (with focus on the gospel according to Matthew).

Lessons are available for three age groups. Recognizing each age group represents multiple stages of development, the instructor is encouraged to adapt lessons to best meet the needs of the class or group. When possible, optional activities are provided to help adapt lessons for diverse settings.

Children (multiage, 6–11): Help children engage in the Bible and introduce mission and beliefs with stories, crafts, and activities.

Youth (ages 12–18): Engage teens in scripture study and provocative questions about identity, mission, and beliefs.

Adult (ages 19 and older): Deepen faith and understanding with reflective questions, theological understanding, and discussion ideas.

Note: Unless otherwise noted, all Bible scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Bible, copyright 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 18)

LESSON 41
9 September 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 7:24–37

Lesson Focus: All human beings have worth.

Objectives

The learners will...

- understand that all people have value and worth.
- reflect on people they know who are different and how the learner can provide ministry to them.
- create a challenge statement for someone they know and live it to the fullest.

Supplies

- Bible
- Paper
- Pens or pencils

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Mark 7:24–37 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, p. 108, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,
prepares and motivates for lesson
(15% of total lesson time)

Have each student share a time they were out of their comfort zone. Use these questions to help guide the conversation if you like:

- Describe a time you felt as if you were out of your comfort zone, an outsider.
- What did it feel like to be an outsider?
- How did you adapt?
- What did you learn from the experience? How do you continue to understand the experience?

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration
and interaction
(35% of total lesson time)

Read Mark 7:24–30.

In this passage Jesus traveled outside of his home to Gentile country. He arrived exhausted. Jesus needed to retreat after providing ministry to his disciples, individuals, and crowds of people. He entered a house yet was still discovered by a woman who wanted his help. She asked him to heal her daughter. He responded by explaining that his people came first in his mission and ministry: “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” When she pushed back saying, “...even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs,” he healed her daughter.

Ask:

- Who do you think the “children” represent?
- Who do you think the “dogs” represent?
- How do you feel about Jesus’ response? Why do you think he responded that way?
- Why do you think Jesus changed his mind?

The “children” represent the Jews, those people who were the focus of Christ’s ministry. The “dogs” represent the Gentiles (non-Jews). Jesus’ response was a sharp rebuke. Yet the woman cleverly and faithfully responded back. Some interpret this passage saying Jesus’ ministry was focusing at this point only on his people, the Jews; hence his response that the children need to be fed first. But this woman of faith challenged Jesus’ rebuke. Her reply shows us that she was able to engage in an argument with equal power to Jesus. She even turned the “dog” metaphor to her advantage. Unlike many opponents of Jesus whose arguments he contradicted, this Gentile woman’s reply was genuine and sincere. Her words weren’t meant to show she was better than Jesus; instead she truly believed Jesus could heal her daughter. Since she was a Gentile, it is unknown how she knew of Jesus. We can wonder if the incredible things he did indeed spread beyond the land of the Jews.

Read Mark 7:31–37.

In this passage Jesus continued his adventures in the lands of the Gentiles. A group of outsiders brought to Jesus a deaf man who had a speech impediment. This time, Jesus did not argue and took the man away from the crowds. He put his fingers in the man’s ears, spat, touched his tongue, and shouted towards the heavens, “Be opened.” The man was healed! He could hear and speak. Even though Jesus asked them not to speak of this miracle, in their amazement, they did anyway.

3 RESPOND Takes the learners from hearing to doing *(35% of total lesson time)*

Both passages describe Jesus providing ministry to those who are much different from him.

Give the students an opportunity to think of someone they know whom they consider much different from them. This difference could include having a different

hobby, ethnicity, religion, theological perspective, family background, political ideals, or gender. Here are some examples, if needed:

- A sibling or family member
- Schoolmate or teammate
- Lifelong friend
- Coworker

As disciples and followers of Christ we embrace the Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons.

- God views all people as having inestimable and equal worth.
- God wants all people to experience wholeness of body, mind, spirit, and relationships.
- We seek to uphold and restore the worth of all people individually and in community, challenging unjust systems that diminish human worth.
- We join with Jesus Christ in bringing good news to the poor, sick, captive, and oppressed.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 13

Distribute paper and pens. After reviewing the above Enduring Principle ask students to create a challenge statement how they are going to provide ministry through finding worth in the person they identified earlier. Have them follow the layout given below. You can encourage them to be creative (write a poem or use other artistic skills) in creating a challenge statement.

I, _____, challenge myself to find value in...

I will embrace him or her by showing...

I will encourage him or her by...

I recognize [individual] is good at...

I will encourage [individual] to...

I will work hard to for [individual].

The greatest characteristic about [individual] is...

I will show his or her worth by...

Because of this challenge statement I will become a blessing to [individual].

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

Challenge the students to live their challenge statement to whomever they identified. Consider starting the next class session with opportunity to debrief on their experience.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

(5% of total lesson time)

Read the following prayer. Explain during each pause that the class is invited to add to the prayer appropriately.

Dear God, we ask that you give us the courage to live our challenge statements so that we may become a blessing to [students may add their chosen person].

Help us to see the value in all people. Understanding the worth of all is imperative to your mission.

Even when we feel like the outsider, let us see the value of the situation and grow as a disciple. May we feel your presence when we need it most. Amen.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 19)

LESSON 42
16 September 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 8:27–38

Lesson Focus: We are called to take up our cross and go.

Objectives

The learners will...

- understand Christ's call for disciples to serve others.
- discern the potentially negative "worldly things" in our lives, and how we can make responsible choices to become a blessing in our communities.
- develop a stronger understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

Supplies

- Bible
- Paper and pens or pencils
- White board or large pad of paper visible to the entire class
- (Optional) CD player or other device to play music

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Mark 8:27–38 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 109–110, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson
(15% of total lesson time)

Explain that every person struggles. Distribute paper and a writing utensil. Have each member of the class think about and write responses to the questions below.

- Share a time you were persecuted for something you strongly believed in. Was it an idea you believed in, a cause, or someone you stood up for? Why do you think others responded to you negatively?
- Who were the individuals who helped you overcome the challenge?

Many Christians of the past have had to experience great persecution for standing up for God's justice and love. One example is Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of the El Salvadorian Catholic Church. An oppressive political group and death squad assassinated him in 1980. Martin Luther King Jr. is an example of a strong Christian leader and advocate of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States in the 1960s. He was killed for what he believed

in and promoted. We cannot forget the thousands of Christians involved in the Civil Rights Movement or those who were persecuted during the civil war in El Salvador.

Today we will explore how Jesus prepared the disciples for his impending suffering. We will talk about how we as disciples can "take up our own cross" and serve others just as Christ served.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction
(35% of total lesson time)

We will explore today's scripture passage in three sections, breaking down different themes and topics.

Read Mark 8:27–30.

You or a student may summarize the scripture after hearing it or you may read this summary:

Jesus was traveling to the villages of Caesarea when he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" He was

asking about the common opinion of his identity. They responded naming individuals such as John the Baptist and Elijah, among others. Then Jesus asked, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter replied, “You are the Messiah.” Jesus immediately ordered them not to tell anyone.

Ask:

- What do you think it means to be the Messiah?
- What do you think it means to be a messiah during the time of Christ?

A traditional Jewish context describes the Messiah as a very influential political or military leader, someone who has been divinely chosen as an agent of God to restore the people.

- Why do you think Christ “sternly ordered” his disciples not to tell anyone?

There could be a few reasons why Jesus instructed them not to tell anyone. He may have believed the disciples did not fully understand his purpose and what was to come. As mentioned above, being the Messiah had certain expectations. The Messiah would be a powerful political or military figure. Jesus would not have been identified as that kind of a messiah. He knew that wasn’t his mission. His power and influence was not politics or military might. It was something much deeper.

Read Mark 8:31–33.

These verses are considered the first passion prediction, or prediction of Jesus’ coming death. Jesus explained he would have to suffer. He would be rejected by the religious leaders, killed, and resurrected after the third day. Peter was concerned for his master to the point of considering if Jesus needed to be exorcised. Jesus immediately called out Peter exclaiming his mind was focused not on divine, but on worldly things.

Ask:

- Imagine being in Peter’s shoes. How would you respond if your mentor and friend told you that he or she was going to suffer and be rejected by everyone who cares about him or her?

Unlike the first passage we read, Jesus calls himself “Son of Man” instead of Messiah. The Son of Man does not simply connect with people’s heartaches and suffering from afar, but instead lives and experiences what humankind experiences—loss, pain, suffering, and death. God also experiences the hardest things God’s creation experiences.

Ask:

- How have you seen God and humankind respond to heartache, pain, or disasters?

Explain how the sentence, “For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things,” could be another reason Jesus didn’t want his disciples to tell everyone his true identity as the Messiah. The disciples did not truly understand all that was involved with Jesus’ messiahship. Because of that, he did not want them to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. A philosopher once said, “Do not pretend to know something you do not know.” Jesus did not want the disciples to proclaim something they did not understand fully.

Read Mark 8:34–38.

Discipleship is the primary focus of this passage. Following Christ and being a Christian come at a cost. Those who study Martin Luther King, Oscar Romero, and thousands of other Christians who have been persecuted understand this. As we read this passage, we need to be aware of the context of this Gospel. Around the time this Gospel was written (60–65 CE), Christians were already being persecuted and killed. As a first-century Christian you would have had to endure risk and potential life-threatening pain in order to live your discipleship.

Taking up one’s cross and denying oneself has deep meaning behind it, even in the 21st century.

Scholars have proposed the idea of denying oneself goes far beyond simply not indulging in one thing or another as we might during the Lenten season. They suggest what Jesus meant was that to follow him involves putting others before oneself—an especially difficult idea in cultures where individualism and the ‘self’ reign supreme.

—*Sermon & Class Helps Year B: New Testament*, p. 109

Note to teacher: This passage leads into today’s activity in the Respond section below.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

God calls humankind to deny ourselves if we are to become strong disciples. We must focus our minds on divine things, not worldly things. One way to do this is by being the best disciple possible. We can carry our own cross by trying to be the best we can be. By being kind, loving, compassionate people we can become our best selves. If we are to follow Christ, then we must put others before ourselves.

Pass out paper to every student. Give the students ample time to think about the following steps. Feel free to play music to help students focus.

Step 1: Have the students write down five of their strongest characteristics that make up their “best self” (for example: musically gifted at cello, works hard at job, participates in worship team at church, student leader, people person, makes others smile, gives great hugs). Encourage them to be specific.

Step 2: Have students identify three “worldly things” that keep them from being their “best self” (too much screen time, social life instead of school work, peer pressure, bad habits). Inform the class that these are private and no one in the class will know.

Explain: Jesus tried to teach his disciples that being a follower of Jesus isn’t easy. Sometimes we have to give up some things for the sake of a better world and for the sake of Christ’s mission of love and peace. Sometimes we need to limit or give up things in our lives to become better people and stronger disciples.

The Community of Christ’s Enduring Principle Responsible Choices comes to mind as we think about what is best for ourselves and how decisions we make affect our community. The final point of the Enduring Principle Responsible Choices states, “We are called to make responsible choices within the circumstances of our lives that contribute to the purposes of God.”

Step 3: Have the students choose one “worldly thing” and one strong characteristic from their lists. Give them time

to brainstorm ways their strong characteristic can help them overcome their “worldly thing.”

Step 4: Ask the class to share: How will embracing your strong characteristic make you a stronger disciple of Jesus? The class may share about any or all of their characteristics.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Challenge each student to answer the following question:

- I will be a stronger disciple of Jesus by... because it will better my community by...

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

As the closing blessing sing “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian.” If this song is not familiar, you may choose a song with which the class and leaders are familiar.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 20)

LESSON 43
23 September 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 9:30–37

Lesson Focus: Disciples are called to be humble and serve those who need God's love.

Objectives

The learners will...

- have an understanding that Jesus truly believed in the worth of all persons.
- explore Community of Christ Enduring Principles as related to this lesson.
- be challenged to show love to those who need it.

Supplies

- Bible
- Pens or pencils

- Handout 1: "Comparing Two Passion Predictions" for every student (end of lesson)
- Handout 2: "Helping the Voiceless Be Heard" for every student (end of lesson)
- *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd edition www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Sharing-in-Community-of-Christ-3rd-edition.pdf
- White board, chalkboard, or large pad of paper
- Marker

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Mark 9:30-37 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 111–112, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Have students think of a time they believed they were the greatest at something, yet were humbled when they discovered someone else was more skilled than they. Give students time to share their experience. How did they feel before, during, and after the experience? What did they learn from the experience? You can begin by telling a personal story related to the question or share one of the scenarios below:

- You were first chair in band all year long, and then someone challenges you and takes first chair.
- You held the school track record with the fastest time until someone beat your time.
- You had the top score at your local arcade on Pac-Man; you return later to see you are now in second place.

- You won the baking competition, and someone else wins the following year.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Read Mark 9:30–32 first.

Explain or summarize: Today's scripture passage begins with Jesus' second prediction of his death and resurrection. He strives to teach his disciples, explaining to them that he will be betrayed and killed. Three days later he will rise again.

Instead of being rejected by religious leaders (as in Mark 8:31), the enemies of Jesus in Mark 9:31 are vaguely identified as "human hands." Many scholars believe Jesus reminded his disciples again (and also for a third time

later in the Gospel) because the disciples just did not understand.

Print copies of handouts prior to class. Give Handout 1 to each student. Help students understand the passages and respond to the questions. Feel free to add your own insights and encourage the conversation.

Read Mark 9:33–37.

Direct students back to the Gather activity. What is something you thought you were the greatest at, then humbled when someone took your place?

In this passage Jesus asked what the disciples were discussing on the road. They were arguing over who was the greatest among them and were embarrassed when Jesus asked what they were talking about. He then gathered his disciples together for a teaching moment saying, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” He then brings a little child in their presence, embracing the child in his arms. He explains whoever welcomes a child in Jesus’ name welcomes both him and God.

Ask:

- Why was it important to bring a child in the midst of his disciples explaining whoever welcomes a child welcomes God?

Explain: Such an action cannot possibly resonate as strongly to us today as it did with Mark’s first readers and early Christians of the Greco-Roman world. Children of Jesus’ time were not considered persons; instead they were property of the men in the family or others. They were socially invisible. Children would not be hanging around the men, and definitely would not be hanging around a teacher and his disciples. Yet Jesus was no ordinary teacher. Instead of keeping the children with the women (who were also invisible in society), he invited a child to be with him. This was far from normal, some may even say radical. Jesus now commanded his disciples to accept and love children who were considered both invisible and inconsequential. The disciples should stop arguing over who is the best, and instead be servants to those who have no value. If they welcome those who have no voice, then they welcome the God of justice and love. The disciples were called to be hospitable then, and we are called to be hospitable now.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Today’s scripture passage challenges listeners and readers to be humble and to serve those who need God’s love.

Give each student a copy of Handout 2 “Helping the Voiceless Be Heard.” Have them fill out the left half, which challenges them to think of individuals or groups who are voiceless, oppressed, or struggle in society. These can be specific people in the lives of each student, or they can be broader representations of some parts of society. Give them plenty of time to fill this out. When they are finished, ask the whole class to create a list together from what they individually came up with. Use a white board, chalkboard, or large pad of paper so the entire class can see.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Our church has nine Enduring Principles that reflect our scripture, discussion, and activities today. Four of these principles are below.

- Worth of all Persons
- Unity in Diversity
- All Are Called
- Responsible Choices

Detailed descriptions of the Enduring Principles can be found in *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd edition, pp. 12–14, or www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Sharing-in-Community-of-Christ-3rd-edition.pdf.

Have each student select an Enduring Principle. Give time for students to think about a person or group of people they identified on Handout 2.

Ask:

- How does this Enduring Principle relate to how you are going to share love and hospitality with that person or group of people?
- What are you going to do to become a blessing to them?

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Offer a closing prayer for your students and those with whom they are challenged to share love and hospitality.

Handout 1: Comparing Two Passion Predictions

Mark 9:30–32 (Part of today’s passage)	Mark 8:31–33
<p>³⁰They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; ³¹for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.” ³²But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.</p>	<p>³¹Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”</p>

What difference do you notice between the two predictions?

What similarities do you notice between the two predictions?

Why do you think the disciples were confused and didn’t understand Jesus?

How would you respond if your teacher, mentor, and best friend told you this news?

Handout 2: Helping the Voiceless Be Heard

Those who are voiceless, oppressed, or have experienced injustice:	I can show them love and hospitality by:

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 21)

LESSON 44
30 September 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 9:38–50

Lesson Focus: Do not harm one another; instead share hospitality, friendship, and love as part of your discipleship.

Objectives

The learners will...

- work together to complete a task.
- explore today's scripture passage.
- understand the importance of not becoming a stumbling block for other disciples.
- be challenged to be peacemakers.

Supplies

- Bible

- Note cards (20 cards per group of students)
- Flexible straws (30 straws per group of students)
- Tape—masking, duct, or transparent (one roll per group of students)
- White board, chalkboard, or large pad of paper
- Marker
- Pad of sticky notes
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Mark 9:38–50 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 113–114, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson
(15% of total lesson time)

Note to teacher: Depending on class size you can either do this activity together or separate the students into groups of four to five. Pass out 20 note cards, 30 straws, and a roll of tape to each group. You may set whatever time limit you like for this activity.

Explain: Each group's goal is to work together to create the tallest tower using only tape, note cards, and straws.

Game requirements:

- Every teammate must participate.
- Teammates must take turns placing or taping a piece of their tower.
- Teams must use at least half of the given materials.

- Teams can only use notecards, tape, and straws to build the tower.

Today's lesson focuses on cooperation as a community of disciples. We explore being kind and loving to one another and living in harmony with others. The activity we just participated in encouraged cooperation and participation by everyone.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction
(35% of total lesson time)

Read Mark 9:38–50.

This scripture passage has a lot going on; some of it may sound strange or uncomfortable. The passage begins with John and the other disciples attempting to stop an "outsider" from helping someone in the name of Jesus.

The disciples were trying to receive praise from Jesus by calling out an outsider whom they believed wasn't worthy to do something in Jesus' name. Jesus said to not stop him or others who do good things in his name. "Whoever is not against us is for us." Jesus thinks anyone who does good work in his name should be able to do so.

Jesus called out John and the other disciples for hindering Christ's mission of serving others. They believed someone outside of their circle of disciples shouldn't be doing what they were called to do.

- When have you called out someone for not doing the right thing?

Reread Mark 9:42–50.

Ask:

- What are your thoughts on this passage? How would you put these verses into your own words?

This passage is a caution to disciples about causing others to stumble in their faith. Jesus used metaphors in this passage to get his point across. He used images of cutting off your hand or foot and tearing out your eye if these parts of the body cause others to sin. Sinning can be described as actions or thoughts that separate you or someone else from God's love. The "hell" Jesus talks about in this context is not some place under our feet in the Earth's crust. Hell, or "Gehenna," was a valley outside of Jerusalem where some of the kings of Judah sacrificed their children by fire; it was deemed to be cursed. Throughout history it was used as a place for punishment, sacrifice, and death for those who were unrighteous.

Jesus was asking his disciples not to hinder others but instead care for them and be examples of Jesus. This passage is not meant to be read as a literal calling for disciples to dismember themselves if they harm someone or do something bad. Instead, it is a challenge for disciples to "...be at peace with one another."

The Community of Christ Mission Initiative Pursue Peace on and for the Earth challenges our church "to restore Christ's covenant of peace, even the Zion of our hopes. The hope of Zion will become reality when we live Christ's peace and generously share his peace with others."

We fulfill God's ultimate vision as we...

- Establish the Temple as a Center to Promote Peacemaking throughout the World.
- Engage Children in Peacemaking around the World.
- Seek Justice, Create Peacemakers around the World.
- Unite with Others to Make Peace around the World.

—"Mission Initiatives," www.CofChrist.com.au/mission-initiatives/

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Read Mark 9:49–50.

Today's scripture passage ends with verses about salt. Salt had many uses during the time of Jesus. It was used to both preserve and season food. It was also used in religious ceremonies and offerings. Eating salt with others was a sign of friendship, hospitality, and kindness. Because of this, salt was a significant resource for the Israelite culture. Jesus himself explains that "salt is good," but if salt loses its flavor, it will be ineffective. As disciples we are called to share our hospitality, love, fellowship, and relationships. Without these, our discipleship is ineffective.

On a white board, chalkboard, or notepad write the words "Hospitality", "Friendship", "Building Community Relationships."

Ask:

- How can you and your congregation share its "saltiness" (hospitality, friendship, building community relationships) in ways that bring about justice-making and peace?

Have the class write their answers in the appropriate column.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Ask each student to choose one answer from the above activity and write it on a sticky note. Have them place it on the back of their cell phone or another place important to them. Challenge them to carry the sticky note with them all week to remind them how they can share their own saltiness in ways that bring about justice and peace.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Close by singing "Lord, Make Us Instruments" CCS 364.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 22)

LESSON 45
07 October 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 10:2–16

Lesson Focus: God created all people to live in love.

Objectives

The learners will...

- explore a challenging scripture passage about divorce during Jesus' time.
- understand that in God's kingdom the lowest members are as valuable as everyone else.
- show appreciation toward a fellow young person they love.

Supplies

- Bible
- Pens or pencils
- Lined paper
- Envelopes
- (Optional) Cell phone with video capabilities

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Mark 10:2–16 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 115–116, available through Herald House.

Note to instructor: The topic of divorce can be traumatic for some, so it is imperative to be sensitive and maintain the dignity and worth of each person. The emphasis of the class material is on God's grace and mercy. It is not a place for judgment or blaming. Please guide the class with sensitivity to assure that the discussion stays grounded in our Enduring Principles Worth of All Persons, Blessings of Community, Grace and Generosity, and Pursuit of Peace (Shalom).

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,
prepares and motivates for lesson
(15% of total lesson time)

Have each class member respond to the following questions:

- Explain a time you were at odds with someone you loved. Why were you disagreeing or angry with each other? What caused the frustration? How did it affect you and the other person? What resolve or reconciliation was involved for the healing process, if any?

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration
and interaction
(35% of total lesson time)

We will be exploring today's scripture passage from Mark 10:2–16 in two parts. But before we begin, we must go over some important thematic elements of Mark's Gospel. The opening of the Gospel sets the stage for Christ's mission of proclaiming the Kingdom of God. For Jesus, this is a place where all are welcome. This is specifically true for those who are oppressed by laws and injustice: women, children, and the poor.

Ask:

- What does the Kingdom of God look like to you?
- What do you think is Community of Christ's view of God's Kingdom?

Community of Christ Basic Beliefs statements are found in *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition. God's kingdom on Earth is described in the Basic Belief Reign of God.

The Reign of God is the coming triumph of love, justice, mercy, and peace that one day will embrace all of creation. Jesus' life and ministry were the living expression of this promise. He taught his disciples to pray for the kingdom's full coming and sent them out into the world to be living emblems of that new creation. "Zion" expresses our commitment to herald God's peaceable kingdom on Earth by forming Christ-centered communities in families, congregations, neighborhoods, cities, and throughout the world.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 16

In Mark's Gospel, the disciples seldom understand Jesus' points and learning moments. They never seem to grasp fully Jesus' concept of the Kingdom of God. We have come to know God as a mystery, yet ever present with us. We place our ideas, laws, and practices in motion, but God's kingdom is far more powerful than the laws and rules we place on ourselves.

Read Mark 10:1–12.

Ask the class about their initial thoughts regarding this passage.

Explain: At first glance this passage may make readers uncomfortable. To understand Mark 10:1–12, we need to understand it in its context. During Jesus' time and in Greco-Roman culture, divorce was a common practice within royalty. King Herod divorced his own wife to marry his brother's widow. People in Herod's region were aware of what he had done. Earlier in this Gospel, John the Baptist called out Herod's act of divorce; he was later killed.

Just like today, marriage and divorce were legal contracts, although they were much easier to make and break than today. In those days, one could simply say, "I don't want to be married anymore." In that time, divorce was typically a tool to leave someone and marry someone else.

The Pharisees asked Jesus if a man could lawfully divorce his wife. Being religious leaders they knew the answer, but they were looking for reasons to accuse Jesus or arrest him. Jesus refers to the Torah (the first five books of the

Hebrew Scriptures) stating God's intentions for positive human relationships. God seeks goodness within all creation. Jesus turns the Pharisees' question regarding divorce to God's expectations for covenant marriage relationships which uphold the worth of both persons.

- How do people model God's expectations in their relationships with others?

Two points to remember:

- Simply divorcing one person in order to marry someone else does not represent the love that God desires for God's creation.
- Jesus was not saying that spouses and children experiencing torment and abuse must stay together just to avoid divorce.

Read Mark 10:13–16.

Ask: Why do you think the disciples wanted to turn the children away?

The second half of our scripture passage opens with the disciples attempting to enforce a normal social standard—children should not interrupt the work and teachings of a teacher and his disciples. In those times, children were not seen as worthy or important. In response to the disciples' rejection of the children, Jesus became "indignant." He expressed anger and annoyance due to the unfair treatment of the children. Jesus demanded that the children be allowed to come to him and stated it is to them the kingdom of God belongs. Jesus' comments are directed at his disciples who are pushing away others who are considered "non-persons."

Ask:

- When have you witnessed a person or group of people being excluded because they were different?
- What was your response to the situation? What would you like to have seen happen in this scenario?

For both passages in today's lesson, love of another person is a key component. In the first passage, Jesus wanted (and wants) his disciples to understand that God's intention for marriage is a covenant relationship between two people. But when relationships are beyond repair due to abuse or pain, we must surround those who hurt with love, especially the children who may be trapped by divorce. In the second passage, Jesus challenges us to love those who are seen as "less than" or the lowest of people in society "for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs."

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Explain: Children play an important role in the Gospel of Mark. Unlike the time period when this passage was written, today children are more protected and well cared for than they were in Jesus' time. Children are seen as kind, loving, and represent goodness in the world.

Ask the class to think about a child or young person in their life (sibling, cousin, church member, camp friend, schoolmate) of whom they think highly. Pass out writing utensils, lined paper, and envelopes. Have each student write a letter of appreciation to that person.

Here is an outlined example to help guide the class:

1. Greet the person by name.
2. Tell them why you are writing ("I see you as an amazing person.").
3. Name the strong characteristics you see in that person (kind, funny, good at an instrument, model athlete).
4. Remind them of a fun or meaningful memory.
5. Include words or phrases of affirmation.
6. Close the letter with your name.

Alternatively: If your students have video capabilities on their cell phones, they can create videos using the guidelines above.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Invite the class to share their letters or videos if they are not too personal. This will allow the class to celebrate each other's relationships. If no one wants to share, encourage the class to give their projects to the person they chose.

- How will you live in love or show love to others this week?

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Ask a volunteer to read the following prayer:

God, the liberator of the broken hearted,

We pray for those who have experienced hopelessness.

We pray for those who are experiencing hopelessness.

We pray for those who will experience hopelessness.

We pray for those who have experienced abuse.

We pray for those who are experiencing abuse.

We pray for those who will experience abuse.

We pray for those who have experienced divorce.

We pray for those who are experiencing divorce.

We pray for those who will experience divorce.

We pray for those who have felt lonely, poor, and afraid.

We pray for those who feel lonely, poor, and afraid.

We pray for those who will feel lonely, poor, and afraid.

Heal their hearts. Heal our hearts.

Let forgiveness, reconciliation, and liberation flow through us.

Assure their hearts, our hearts, that you, God, are always present.

Weeping with us during our challenging moments,

Celebrating with us during our joyous moments,

and

Loving us through all moments.

Amen.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 23)

LESSON 46
14 October 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 10:17–31

Lesson Focus: As disciples we must ask ourselves, “What must I do?”

Objectives

The learners will...

- explore God’s call to us as disciples in God’s reign.
- reflect on what they must do as followers of Jesus.

Supplies

- Bible
- Pens or pencils

- Dwelling in the Word handout (one for each student)
- “Discipleship and Reign of God” handout (one for each group)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- (Optional) Equipment to record a video

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Mark 10:17–31 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 117–118 available through Herald House..

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,
prepares and motivates for lesson
(15% of total lesson time)

Ask:

- Who is a mentor in your life that you look up to?
- Why is that person so special to you?
- If that person said, “Leave everything and follow me...,” would you? Why or why not?
- Could you really give up everything—your home, possessions, internet access, phones, other relationships—just to follow this person?

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration
and interaction
(35% of total lesson time)

To explore today’s scripture passage, the students will be participating in the spiritual practice of Dwelling in the Word. Explain doing a spiritual practice gives us the opportunity to connect with God, ourselves, and sometimes our community. As we partake in Dwelling in the Word, we explore and strive to grasp what the ancient scripture is telling us. Invite the students to find a comfortable place in the room where they can listen and relax. Inform them you will read the passage aloud first, giving them the opportunity to simply listen and connect.

Read Mark 10:17–31. After the first reading give students some time to reflect. Next, pass out the Dwelling in the

Word handout. During the second reading invite the class to highlight, underline, make notes, and begin answering the questions provided. They may also continue to relax and listen.

Read Mark 10:17–31 a second time. Pause for reflection and give students time to answer the questions. Allow time for the class to share their reflections.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

The rich man approached Jesus desiring to follow him as a disciple. Ultimately he was unable to take the final step of giving up all his possessions to the poor and following him. God calls all people to strive to follow in God's loving, hopeful, liberating, and kingdom-building mission. In Community of Christ Discipleship and The Reign of God are important Basic Beliefs.

Discipleship

Being a Christian is more than holding a list of right ideas; it is about radical obedience to Jesus in every part of life. God's boundless love sets us free for lives of responsible stewardship in which we generously offer our lives in service to God's reign. Discipleship is both an inward and outward journey. Jesus calls us to follow him and to invite others to experience the transforming power of his grace.

The Reign of God

The Reign of God is the coming triumph of love, justice, mercy, and peace that one day will embrace all of creation. Jesus' life and ministry were the living expression of this promise. He taught his disciples to pray for the kingdom's full coming and sent them out into the world to be living emblems of that new creation. "Zion" expresses our commitment to herald God's peaceable kingdom on Earth by forming Christ-centered communities in families, congregations, neighborhoods, cities, and throughout the world.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 16

Skit Experience:

- Divide class into groups of three to five students.
- Make sure each group has the "Discipleship and Reign of God" handout.

- Each group will be creating a skit that represents discipleship and God's kingdom as described by the Community of Christ Basic Beliefs Discipleship and The Reign of God.
- Before group planning allow individuals to think about the following questions:
 - What is God calling me to "give up" as a disciple?
 - What must I do to fully live in God's love?
 - What change can I achieve for God's kingdom?
 - How can I do my best to live in loving relationships with God and others?

Skit Parameters:

- Everyone must participate.
- Each skit must ask, "What must I do?"
- The skit should be one to three minutes long.
- The skit must incorporate one question from above.

After ample time is given for groups to prepare, have them share with the class. If desired and able, record skits to show the congregation and to use as a fun resource for your congregation or youth group.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

How might Jesus complete the sentence, "You lack one thing..." if he was speaking to you or to us today?

—adapted from "Exploring the Scripture" for Mark 10:17–31 in *Sermon & Class Helps*, Year B: New Testament, pp. 117–118.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

For the closing prayer, ask, "God, what must I do...?" Give time for students to discern the question. End class by singing "What Does the Lord Require of You?" CCS 580.

Dwelling in the Word Mark 10:17–31

As you engage with the scripture passage listen to what the Spirit is trying to say to your soul.

¹⁷ As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁸ Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.’” ²⁰ He said to him, “Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.” ²¹ Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” ²² When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

²³ Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” ²⁴ And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁶ They were greatly astounded and said to one another, “Then who can be saved?” ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.”

²⁸ Peter began to say to him, “Look, we have left everything and followed you.” ²⁹ Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, ³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.”

With whom do you identify in this passage? Jesus? The rich man? A listener passing by? Peter?

Why do you feel you resonate with this person?

What words, images, or phrases are speaking to you in this text?

What is God's invitation to you in this scripture passage?

What is God's invitation to our community in this scripture passage?

What is the relevance of this scripture passage in today's world?

What does this passage tell us about God?

Discipleship and Reign of God Handout

Discipleship

Being a Christian is more than holding a list of right ideas; it is about radical obedience to Jesus in every part of life. God's boundless love sets us free for lives of responsible stewardship in which we generously offer our lives in service to God's reign. Discipleship is both an inward and outward journey. Jesus calls us to follow him and to invite others to experience the transforming power of his grace.

The Reign of God

The Reign of God is the coming triumph of love, justice, mercy, and peace that one day will embrace all of creation. Jesus' life and ministry were the living expression of this promise. He taught his disciples to pray for the kingdom's full coming and sent them out into the world to be living emblems of that new creation. "Zion" expresses our commitment to herald God's peaceable kingdom on Earth by forming Christ-centered communities in families, congregations, neighborhoods, cities, and throughout the world.

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ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 24)

LESSON 47
21 October 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 10:35–45

Lesson Focus: Disciples of Jesus humbly serve others.

Objectives

The learners will...

- explore the meaning of servant leadership.
- discuss the focus scripture passage.
- consider what “radical obedience to Jesus in every part of life” looks like when living the Enduring Principles of Community of Christ.

Supplies

- Large erasable writing surface or flip chart and markers or chalk
- Bibles or copies of the focus scripture passage
- Nine note cards or half sheets of paper with one Community of Christ Enduring Principle written on each (duplicate Enduring Principles as needed for larger classes)
- Colored pencils, pens, or markers
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Mark 10:35–45 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 119–120, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

On a white board, chalkboard, or flip chart, prepare a word game by drawing an underline for each letter of the term “servant leader,” allowing extra space between the two words. Ask class members to guess what the words are, one letter at a time. When a letter is guessed, fill in the correct blanks until they have either guessed both words or all the blanks have been filled in.

Form two groups and give one group the word “servant” and the second group the word “leader.” Give the groups one to two minutes to list descriptions or characteristics of their word. Compare the group lists and discuss how they would define “servant leader.” Have the full group make a list of descriptions or characteristics of a servant leader. Invite students to think of someone who is an example of being a servant leader.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Setting the scene: Up to this point Jesus and the disciples had spent most of their time in Galilee, but had recently begun moving into Judea and on toward Jerusalem. This is the third time Jesus told them about what he would soon experience. Like the other two times, the disciples didn’t believe him or didn’t understand.

Ask three volunteers to read Mark 10:35–45, or assign each class member one of the following reading parts: 1) narrative verses not in quotes, 2) the words spoken by James and John, and 3) the words spoken by Jesus.

³⁵James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” ³⁶And he said to them, “What is it you want me to do for you?” ³⁷And they said to him, “Grant us to sit,

one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”³⁸But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”³⁹They replied, “We are able.” Then Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; ⁴⁰but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

⁴¹When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. ⁴²So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ⁴³But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Discuss the following questions.

- What were James and John asking Jesus?
- How did Jesus respond to James and John?
- How would you explain the meaning of Jesus’ response to a friend?
- Many people hoped a conquering ruler would come to save them from harsh conditions of oppression, but Jesus was not the kind of leader they expected. How would you describe Jesus as a servant leader?

Form groups of two or three and have each group discuss the following. Share ideas and responses with the larger group.

- What would be different about the scripture passage if it took place today?
- How would Jesus respond to the disciples?
- How would he demonstrate servant leadership?

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Read the following statement to the class.

Discipleship: Being a Christian is more than holding a list of right ideas; it is about radical obedience to Jesus in every part of life (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 16).

Discuss the following questions.

- How does this statement compare to what Jesus told the disciples in today’s scripture passage?
- What do you think “radical obedience to Jesus in every part of life” means? What does it look like in your home, school, or neighborhood?
- When, and with whom, do you find it to be easy? When, and with whom, do you find it to be difficult?

Community of Christ Enduring Principles describe what God is like and what it means to live like Jesus.

Have each student take a note card or slip of paper with an Enduring Principle on it. On one side of the paper, have each student write how they define the Enduring Principle, or how they would describe it to a friend. On the other side of the paper, have each student describe what it looks like to live this Enduring Principle as “radical obedience to Jesus in every part of life.”

Note to teacher: This may be challenging for some youth. Help guide the students as needed in exploring a deeper understanding of what it means to live the Enduring Principles—to get beyond the surface understanding. Be prepared to provide examples as needed.

Discuss responses with the larger group.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

It was hard for Jesus’ disciples to hear him say that in order to become great they had to become servants to each other. It was also difficult for them to learn that Jesus came to serve and not be served. That wasn’t what they expected from the one they followed.

Invite each student to write one thing they will do in the coming week to be the kind of servant leaders Jesus described and modeled...or to live a deeper understanding of their Enduring Principle. Have students write their names on what they have written, fold the paper, and place it in a basket or scatter on a table.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Have each student draw a paper from the basket or table. They will be a prayer partner for the person whose name they have drawn. Throughout the week they will hold the person and their commitment in prayer.

Offer a closing prayer or sing “Make Me a Servant” CCS 597.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 25)

LESSON 48
28 October 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 10:46–52

Lesson Focus: Jesus reveals and teaches God’s love for all people.

Objectives

The learners will...

- experience a simple activity with limited sight.
- discuss the focus scripture passage.
- explore Community of Christ Basic Belief and Enduring Principle upholding the worth of all persons.

Supplies

- Paper plates (one per student) and markers
- Bibles or copies of the focus scripture passage
- Copies of “Worth of All Persons Means You!” (one per student) and pens or pencils

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Mark 10:46–52 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, p. 121, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Welcome students by name to the space and ask about their week. For those who were part of the previous lesson, ask what their experience was with living their Enduring Principle or modeling servant leadership. What was their experience like being a prayer partner for another?

Give each student a paper plate and a marker. Instruct the students to place the paper plate on top of their heads. Then ask them to draw several simple images on the plate while it is still on their head. You can have them draw a person, the church building, a house, or any simple images you choose. Share the artwork and talk about the challenges or insights from the experience. Was anyone able to draw better images because they had to concentrate in a different way?

This activity is an example of how simple tasks can become difficult when our typical way of seeing or doing is disrupted. Jesus’ disciples were often blinded to seeing

who Jesus really was, and what he was trying to teach them.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Read Mark 10:46–52 and discuss the following.

⁴⁶They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁸Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁹Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.” ⁵⁰So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹Then

Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." ⁵²Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

This is the last healing narrative in Mark's Gospel. He used it to guide his readers to better understand the way the disciples and other followers, the "insiders," were still blind to who Jesus was and what he was revealing about God's reign. It also pointed out that Jesus would continue his healing ministry to right the wrongs toward outsiders. Outsiders then and now include the poor, those on the margins of society, the sick, females, children, and the lost. Interestingly, outsiders such as the physically blind Bartimaeus could more clearly see who Jesus was, and his faith was often stronger than that of the disciples.

- Who are considered "outsiders" in your school or neighborhood?
- When have you seen an example of an "outsider" being more like Jesus than someone who calls himself a follower of Jesus?

Bartimaeus was different from the disciples in another way. Jesus had invited the disciples to follow him. Bartimaeus responded to Jesus' healing ministry by immediately choosing to follow without an invitation.

- What might be a reason Jesus' disciples and the crowd initially tried to silence Bartimaeus?
- Why do you think some followers of Jesus today are blind to how Jesus revealed the kingdom of God...an upside-down kingdom? Where do you see examples of this?

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Read the following Community of Christ Basic Belief statement on Humanity:

Every human being is created in the image of God. In Jesus Christ, God took on the limits of human flesh and culture, and is known through them. We therefore affirm without exception the worth of every human being. We also affirm that God has blessed humankind with the gift of agency: the ability to choose whom or what we will serve within the circumstances of our lives.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 15

Compare this statement to the scripture passage from Mark.

- How does the scripture passage affirm this statement?
- Share your feelings about the following sentence: "We therefore affirm without exception the worth of every human being." What about school shooters, abusers, or drunk drivers charged with vehicular homicide?
- How do you see this Basic Belief demonstrated in your congregation? Your home? Your school? Your neighborhood?
- How would your congregation, home, school, or neighborhood be different if this Basic Belief was practiced?

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Community of Christ's Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons further affirms the importance of the Basic Belief about Humanity. Give each student a copy of "Worth of All Persons Means You!" It is important for each person to recognize their own worth and belovedness, as well as share that understanding with others. The commitment statements have been adapted from the statements in *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 13. Have each student consider how they will complete and live the commitment statements. Have them also consider with whom they want to share this understanding (someone who doesn't believe they are of worth, someone who is an outsider, someone they don't know well, or someone with whom they disagree). Share responses as students are willing.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Offer a closing prayer of blessing as each student claims their worth and belovedness and as they share God's love with others.

Worth of All Persons means *You!*

God views *me* as having inestimable worth.

God views _____ as having inestimable worth.

God wants *me* to experience wholeness of body, mind, spirit, and relationships.

God wants _____ to experience wholeness of body, mind, spirit, and relationships.

I will seek to uphold and restore the worth of all people individually and in my community. I will challenge _____ that diminish human worth by _____.

I will join with Jesus in bringing good news to _____.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 26)

LESSON 49
4 November 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 12:28–34

Lesson Focus: The kingdom of God comes near when we love God and love others as ourselves.

Objectives

The learners will...

- consider persons and achievements that are considered the greatest.
- discuss the meaning of the focus scripture passage.
- explore the meaning of praxis.

Supplies

- Paper squares or note cards, at least two per student
- Pens, pencils, or markers
- Bibles or copies of scripture passages

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Mark 12:28–34 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, p. 123, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Welcome students by name and ask about their week. Invite any who shared the Worth of All Persons with another to tell about their experience.

Ask students what GOAT means. Accept all answers and affirm that it stands for the “Greatest of All Time.” Give each student two squares of paper or note cards. Think of someone they think of as the GOAT. On one square write the person’s name, and on the other square write what they are known for. If the group is small, you may have each student think of two or three GOATs. When completed, mix all the squares and arrange in equal rows to play a matching game. Take turns trying to match each person with their achievement.

In today’s scripture passage, a scribe tests Jesus by asking him which commandment is the greatest.

- How would you respond if a friend asked what is the greatest commandment?.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Mark 12:28–34 explores events during Jesus’ second trip to Jerusalem. His authority had just been challenged by Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees. Now a scribe questioned Jesus about which commandment was first.

Definitions:

- Pharisees: priests and elders who were strict observers of Jewish ceremonies and practices
- Herodians: part of a political movement that supported the Pharisees and also supported the right of the Herods to rule
- Sadducees: a ruling class which rejected anything not in Hebraic Law, such as resurrection
- Scribes: experts on Jewish life and law whose role was to accurately preserve both in written records

Choose volunteers to read aloud Deuteronomy 6:4–5 and Leviticus 19:18. Then form the class into three groups to

read aloud Mark 12:28–34. Have group 1 read everything that doesn't have quotation marks, group 2 read words said by the scribe, and group 3 read words Jesus spoke.

Deuteronomy 6:4–5

⁴Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

Leviticus 19:18

¹⁸You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

Mark 12:28–34

²⁸One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" ²⁹Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; ³⁰you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' ³¹The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." ³²Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'; ³³and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself,'—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." ³⁴When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that no one dared to ask him any question.

Mark used this incident in Jesus' life to emphasize the connection between what Jesus taught and practiced and the Hebraic traditional teachings. Today we might understand this as it relates to differing beliefs among Christians, or even among people in the same congregation. How do we have civil conversations about differing beliefs rather than confronting others when we disagree?

The scribe understood the importance of what Jesus said. However, Jesus' comment to the scribe indicated that until the scribe moved beyond belief to action, he didn't really understand it.

- Why do you think Jesus added the phrase about loving God with your *mind* to the traditional Shema (pronounced *shuh-mah*) written in Deuteronomy?

Form groups of two or three. Invite each group to place themselves in the Mark text and rewrite the conversation between Jesus and the scribe as it might take place today.

You may choose to assign each group a different scenario to frame the conversation in different ways; for example, at school between friends, at home between a parent and child, or between two Christians with different beliefs. Share responses with the larger group.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

For Mark, hearing the word was secondary to practicing it, acting on it, incorporating it into one's life.

Remind students of the following statement discussed in lesson 47.

Discipleship: Being a Christian is more than holding a list of right ideas; it is about radical obedience to Jesus in every part of life (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 16).

Another way of applying this understanding is through praxis. The section "We Share Temple as Life-giving Symbol" in *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, pp. 19–21, defines praxis as "a recurring process of transformative action and reflection." Praxis is not just about loving God with your words and actions, but also with your mind—reflecting on actions and responses.

"What would Jesus do?" is a popular phrase.

- Invite each student to amend this phrase, or write a new phrase, that reflects an understanding of praxis.
- How do these phrases express loving God with our whole self and loving neighbors as ourselves?

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Jesus told the scribe that he wasn't far from the kingdom of God. When people love God and neighbor, it is a key step in transforming the world, creating the kingdom of God on Earth.

Allow a few moments for quiet reflection. Invite each student to think of at least one action they will commit to doing this coming week to put into praxis (action and reflection) loving neighbor as self. Share commitments with the larger group as students are willing. You may choose to assign prayer partners to support one another's commitments.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise,
blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Read or sing the following song.

Love, love, love, love;

The gospel in one word is love.

Love your neighbor as your sister/brother,

Love, love, love.

(Sung to the tune "Rose, Rose" and can be sung as a round)

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 27)

LESSON 50
11 November 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 12:38–44

Lesson Focus: We respond to God's generosity with our lives.

Objectives

The learners will...

- experience unjust circumstances of inequality.
- create and discuss interpretations of the focus scripture passage.
- explore the Enduring Principle Grace and Generosity.

Supplies

- Bibles or copies of scripture passage
- Half sheets of paper (one per student) and pens or pencils

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Mark 12:38–44 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 124–125, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Prior to class, arrange the room and seating so that a select few will have the most comfortable and choice seating, and the rest of the class seated behind the select few in less comfortable seating or small floor space. Determine who will be the "select few" (gender, hair color, eye color, or whatever you choose), and direct students to the appropriate seating. This is to simulate the scribes' behavior in seating themselves in the best seats in the synagogues.

The setting for today's scripture passage is the Jerusalem temple where Jesus was teaching a large crowd of people who were listening to him "with delight."

Ask a volunteer to read Mark 12:38–44. Invite students to think about who they are in this passage based on their current seating.

³⁸As he taught, he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, ³⁹and to have the

best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! ⁴⁰They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

⁴¹He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴²A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. ⁴³Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. ⁴⁴For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

Discuss the following questions.

- Based on the current seating, who were you in the passage? How did it feel to be a scribe, a member of the crowd, or the poor widow?
- Based on your seating, who might you represent in your community today? How might it feel to be that person?

Invite students to rearrange the seating so that all can participate equally in the rest of class.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

There are several ways today's passage can be interpreted. Give each student a half sheet of paper and have them write what they think the lesson is in this passage. Discuss the following interpretations, then compare with what the students have written.

Read the following interpretations of Mark 12:38–44:

1. It can be seen as a critique of religious hypocrisy when the focus is on the scribes and their masquerade as faithful and pious (holy) authorities.
2. It can be seen as a critique of unjust temple practices where the most vulnerable, such as the poor widow, were economically exploited.
3. It can be seen as a model for generosity based on faith where those with much share minimally while those with little share all that they have.

Have the students read their interpretations and compare with the ones above. Discuss the following questions:

- With which of the above interpretations does yours most closely align?
- With which of the above interpretations do you most agree and disagree? Explain.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing

(35% of total lesson time)

In Mark's Gospel this is Jesus' last teaching moment before events spiral toward his arrest, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection. Some scholars see Jesus subtly pointing out the widow's faithful giving to a flawed institution as a hint of his offering himself for a flawed humanity. Like the widow, Jesus would give all that he had—in this case, his life.

This scripture passage has often been used to focus on whole-life generosity based on a faithful response to God's generosity toward us as expressed in the life Jesus lived and gave for all. Our response is to love God through generous acts of living and giving—living our lives committed to faithful discipleship and giving of our time, talents, treasure, and testimony without thought of getting public recognition or reward.

Ask the students which Enduring Principle most fits with the lesson of today's passage. Accept all responses, then uphold the following descriptions of Grace and Generosity.

- God's grace, especially as revealed in Jesus Christ, is generous and unconditional.
- Having received God's generous grace, we respond generously and graciously receive the generosity of others.
- We offer all we are and have to God's purposes as revealed in Jesus Christ.
- We generously share our witness, resources, ministries, and sacraments according to our true capacity.

Check for understanding of each description, then assign each student one of the descriptions. You may choose to have students work in pairs. Have the student(s) rewrite their assigned description based on what has been discussed and learned in today's lesson. Share responses with the larger group and have each student or pair explain why they chose the wording they did.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

On the back of the half sheets of paper, have students create a personal SMART goal of one act of generosity they will do this week. It should be:

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Timely

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

(5% of total lesson time)

Invite students to offer silent prayers of thanksgiving for God's generosity, asking for insight about tangible ways to respond personally and to have the will to do so. Close the prayer with a phrase such as "Thank you for hearing our petitions. We offer this in Jesus' name. Amen."

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 28)

LESSON 51
18 November 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 13:1–10

Lesson Focus: We are partners in building God's kingdom on Earth.

Objectives

The learners will...

- create a temple structure.
- discuss the focus scripture passage.
- explore how living the Enduring Principles can bring positive change in our lives and in our communities.
- develop an action plan for positive change.

Supplies

- Wooden building blocks or Jenga™ blocks
- Bibles or copies of scripture passage
- Flip chart or large erasable writing surface and markers or chalk
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Mark 13:1–10 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 126–127, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Provide each student with a set of building blocks. Allow 2–3 minutes for each student to create a magnificent temple structure.

Ask:

- Are you satisfied with your structures being magnificent?
- If not, how might all the blocks be combined into one magnificent structure? What will the design be, and how will you construct it?

Allow 3–5 minutes for the class to assemble one magnificent temple structure.

- How do you feel about the structure and the process you used to build it?
- Are you proud of what you have created?

- How would you feel if you had spent years building a truly magnificent structure, and after all your hard work someone told you it would be destroyed?

This is perhaps how the disciples felt about what Jesus told them in today's scripture passage.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Read Mark 13:1–8 aloud with each verse being read by a different person.

¹As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!" ²Then Jesus asked him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down."

³When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴"Tell us, when will this

be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?" ⁵Then Jesus began to say to them, "Beware that no one leads you astray. ⁶Many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. ⁷When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. ⁸For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

Jesus' words to the disciples must have been shocking! Who of them could imagine that the magnificent temple could possibly be destroyed?

The author of Mark's Gospel wrote during a time when Jews were recruiting help to defend the temple and Judaism against Imperial Rome, which already controlled the country. The zealots were convinced they needed to fight to preserve the Davidic kingly legacy. They believed the temple would be protected since it was the place where they were closest to God. Rome was intent on suppressing the revolt and would be victorious in 70 CE, destroying the temple in the process.

Jesus' words to the disciples on the Mount of Olives warned them to avoid taking part in the rebellion, not to be swayed by those who came declaring a message that their way led to salvation. Jesus spoke of the destruction of the temple, of impending suffering through wars and disasters, not as a prediction or prophecy, but as a natural and logical consequence of evil. Jesus wanted the disciples to see that God's goal for the world was different from preserving buildings and religious systems.

Discuss:

- When have you experienced a significant change in your life? Did you dread the change, or were you excited about the change? What was a positive result of the change?
- What do you see in the news today that drives people to think that the end of the world is near?
- Why is it important to understand Jesus' comment that what seems to be the end of the world as the disciples knew it was really the beginning of the birth pangs of God's kingdom?

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

The following activity will help students explore how active discipleship can bring hope to difficult circumstances in the world today.

Form two groups and assign each group one of the following Enduring Principles. Have each group discuss the descriptions and make a list of changes in the world that would be possible if the Enduring Principle was lived more fully.

Responsible Choices

- God gives humans the ability to make choices about whom or what they will serve. Some people experience conditions that diminish their ability to make choices.
- Human choices contribute to good or evil in our lives and in the world.
- Many aspects of creation need redemption because of irresponsible and sinful human choices
- We are called to make responsible choices within the circumstances of our lives that contribute to the purposes of God.

Pursuit of Peace (Shalom)

- God wants shalom (justice, reconciliation, well-being, wholeness, and peace) for all of creation.
- Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God's shalom (peace) reveals the meaning of God's peace in all aspects of life.
- The vision of Zion is to promote God's reign on Earth, as proclaimed by Jesus Christ, through the leavening influence of just and peaceful communities.
- We courageously and generously share the peace of Jesus Christ with others.
- Led by the Holy Spirit, we work with God and others to restore peace (shalom) to creation.

- We celebrate God’s peace wherever it appears or is being pursued by people of good will.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 13

Have each group share their list and discuss the following questions.

- Where do you find common possibilities for positive change?
- What idea might be something you are willing to do?
- What are some of the things that might prevent you from following through?

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

As a group, decide on two or three of the ideas listed and make an action plan for how you will support one another in making positive changes in your lives and in

your community. How will you support each other in these efforts? Who will you invite to join you in making these positive changes?

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

(5% of total lesson time)

Read or sing “Circle Round for Freedom” CCS 383. Invite students to share words to complete the verse below and read or sing again. Repeat as time and creativity allow!

Circle round for _____, circle round for peace;

For all of us imprisoned, circle for release.

Circle for _____, circle for each soul;

For the children of our children, keep the circle whole.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 29)

LESSON 52
25 November 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: John 18:33–37

Lesson Focus: Jesus revealed the truth about God’s kingdom.

Objectives

The learners will...

- consider examples of God’s upside-down kingdom.
- discuss the scripture passage and different concepts of king.
- explore the meaning and examples of statements from “We Proclaim Jesus Christ.”

Supplies

- Crown (this can be made simply out of paper)
- Copies of John 18:33–37 script, end of lesson
- Large writing surface or flip chart and markers
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 18:33–37 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 128–129, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Prior to the students’ arrival, rearrange the classroom so that furniture, wall hangings, and moveable objects are upside down. Based on what students have learned in recent lessons, ask what the room might represent as it relates to Jesus’ teaching. Accept and discuss all responses, then guide (if needed) discussion to the meaning of the kingdom of God as an upside-down kingdom. It was not what people expected, but it is the kingdom that Jesus revealed. Ask students to give examples of God’s upside-down kingdom from previous lessons and focus scripture passages.

Have the students help reset the room and proceed with the lesson.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Distribute copies of the script for John 18:33–37 and assign parts as follows: a narrator, Pilate, and Jesus. Have the readers for Pilate and Jesus stand facing each other with the narrator off to the side. Place the crown where Pilate can point to it when questioning Jesus.

After acting out the short play, make two columns on a flip chart or large writing surface. Label one Pilate’s Concept of King; label the other Jesus’ Concept of King. Using the scripture passage and what the class knows about the time period of 30–33 CE, list ideas in the columns. Compare and discuss the two lists.

John began his Gospel by declaring, “And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the

glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). In today's passage John mentions truth for the last time. A scholar has stated it this way: "The opponents of Jesus have rejected the 'truth' and sided with the 'world.' In this last reference to the truth, Jesus declares that his kingdom is present in everyone who hears and accepts his testimony" (Robert A. Bryant, *Feasting on the Word, Year B, Vol. 4*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009, p. 337).

Discuss the following questions.

- Why was Pilate concerned about Jesus' influence?
- In what ways is it difficult to separate allegiance to earthly rulers and allegiance to God?
- How would you describe the "truth" that Jesus proclaims to a friend?

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

The Christian community has labeled this Sunday either "Christ the King" or "The Reign of Christ" Sunday. On this last day of the lectionary year we pause to recognize who Jesus was and what he revealed to the world about God's kingdom before we begin the cycle again. We affirm that our allegiance is not to earthly rulers but to God alone as revealed through Jesus Christ.

Prepare the following statements from "We Proclaim Jesus Christ" (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, pp. 22–23) on separate slips of paper. Give one slip to each student or small group of two or three. Give time for the students to consider the following:

- What does this statement mean to you?
- Provide an example from a previous lesson of how Jesus demonstrated this statement OR
- Provide an example of someone today who lives the meaning of this statement.

"We Proclaim Jesus Christ"

By the mystery of the incarnation, Jesus, born of Mary, came into the world to live and dwell among us to reveal God's nature and will.

He prophetically condemned injustice in the temple and proclaimed the good news of the coming reign of God on earth, preaching liberation to the oppressed and repentance to the oppressors.

He taught his followers to love God, to love their neighbors, and to love their enemies.

By eating with sinners, serving the poor, healing the unclean, blessing children, and welcoming women and men as equals among his disciples, Jesus declared that all persons are of worth in the sight of God.

Have the students read their statements and share responses.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Jesus stated that he came into the world to testify to the truth. He demonstrated that by what he did, with whom he associated, and what he taught.

Invite students to silently reflect on what they do, with whom they associate, and what they teach by their attitudes and actions.

- What attitudes and actions model Jesus' teaching?
- What attitude or action might you change to better model Jesus' teaching?

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Offer a closing prayer of blessing or sing together "Seek Ye First" CCS 599 or "Seek First" CCS 600.

Script for John 18:33–37

Narrator: Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him,

Pilate: Are you the King of the Jews?

Narrator: Jesus answered,

Jesus: Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?

Narrator: Pilate replied,

Pilate: I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?

Narrator: Jesus answered,

Jesus: My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.

Narrator: Pilate asked him,

Pilate: So you are a king?

Narrator: Jesus answered,

Jesus: You say that I am a king. For this I was born, for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.