



Community of Christ

# COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS

YOUTH

10 SEPTEMBER 2017 — 15 OCTOBER 2017

# 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 A: 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 42  
10 September 2017

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 18:15–20

**Lesson Focus:** Jesus teaches us how to solve problems peacefully.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- demonstrate compromise and sharing.
- practice working together toward reconciliation.
- discuss steps in sharing the peace of Jesus with others.

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 18:15–20 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 102, available through Herald House.

## Supplies

- *Community of Christ Sings*
- String or yarn (four pieces, approximately 18 in/45 cm each)
- Rubber bands (approximately two in/five cm in diameter)
- Plastic cups (six or more)
- Strips of paper with statements about the Enduring Principle Pursuit of Peace (see Respond section)

## 1 GATHER

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

Working Together for Peace game (view at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5JAX2bjeH8>)

This works best with four people, but it can be done with fewer if one person holds more than one string. The object of the game is to work together to stack six or more plastic cups into a pyramid while holding only the strings attached to the rubber band.

- Stack six plastic cups upside down in the middle of a table.
- Tie the ends of four pieces of string or yarn (approximately 18 in/45 cm) to a rubber band (approximately two in/five cm in diameter).
- Strings should be tied so the rubber band is divided into quarters. When all four strings are pulled, the circumference of the rubber band expands and can be placed over the end of a cup. When strings are released, the rubber band contracts to fit snugly around the cup, which can now be moved by pulling gently on the strings.
- One by one, move the cups into a pyramid. When a cup is in the desired place, all strings must be pulled hard enough to stretch the rubber band to release the cup.

- The game can be altered by having more or fewer cups to stack, requiring different stacked shapes, moving the cups a distance, or moving (transferring) objects from one cup to another.

Discuss the challenges of this activity, and how it demonstrates compromise or working together for a common solution.

## 2 ENGAGE

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

Ask, “What does the phrase ‘where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them’ mean to you?”

It may seem like an affirmation for small groups of disciples, but it is actually a statement about reconciliation.

Invite youth to take turns reading Matthew 18:15–20.

<sup>15</sup>If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. <sup>16</sup>But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every

word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup>If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup>Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup>Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Discuss the following questions with youth:

- Can you think of a time when you solved a problem peacefully? What did you do, and how did the person respond?
- What does Jesus teach about reconciliation? What is the process toward reconciliation described in this passage?

Make a list of possible scenarios requiring reconciliation. You may come up with scenarios prior to class, or have youth come up with scenarios. Form groups of two or three and give each group a different scenario. Have them discuss and act or draw how they can work for reconciliation. Encourage them to demonstrate all the steps of the reconciliation process described in the scripture passage.

### 3 RESPOND

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

Prior to class, prepare strips of paper with the following statements and hide them around the room.

Pursuit of Peace (Shalom) is both an Enduring Principle and a Mission Initiative in Community of Christ. Invite youth to find the strips of paper with the following statements. Have them read the statement they find, and make a connection between the statement and the scripture passage from Matthew.

- 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.

—"We Share Enduring Principles," *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 13

Say, "When we work together for reconciliation, we are pursuing peace and sharing the peace of Jesus."

### 4 SEND

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

Ask students to think about a problem they have, or one they have seen, with a family member or friend. Discuss the steps toward peace from today's scripture story. Help each one think of the first step they will take to share Christ's peace with their family member or friend.

Invite students to complete the following challenge statement:

Today I will share Christ's peace with \_\_\_\_\_  
by \_\_\_\_\_.

### 5 BLESS

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

Invite students to sing "I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me" CCS 581. Ask for different actions to include in the song (I'm gonna pray, share, love, hug, dance) and demonstrate each action while singing.

Offer a closing prayer, or invite a student to offer a closing prayer.

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 19)

LESSON 43  
17 September 2017

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 18:21–35

**Lesson Focus:** We must forgive others as God forgives us.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- share examples of forgiveness.
- discuss what the parable teaches about God's forgiveness and how we are to forgive others.
- explore the Enduring Principle Grace and Generosity.

## Supplies

- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Optional: three bowls, a container of ground black pepper, and dishwashing liquid
- Paper and crayons or markers

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 18:21–35 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 104, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Gather and ask students to describe the steps toward solving a problem peacefully from last week's scripture story (see p. 4). If students used any of the steps to help solve problems, invite them to share about their experiences.

Sing "God Forgave My Sin in Jesus' Name" CCS 627.

Ask the following questions:

- What does it mean to forgive someone? Have you forgiven someone? How did you feel?
- What does it mean to be forgiven? Have you been forgiven for something you did or said? How did you feel?

## 2 ENGAGE

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

Today's scripture story is a parable about forgiveness that follows the scripture story we read last week.

Have students take turns reading Matthew 18:21–35.

<sup>21</sup>Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

<sup>23</sup>For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was

brought to him; <sup>25</sup>and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup>So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' <sup>29</sup>Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' <sup>30</sup>But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup>Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' <sup>34</sup>And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup>So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Explain that the parable is full of hyperbole (exaggerations) that seem shocking or unreasonable to the reader. Ask students to point out examples of hyperbole (forgiving someone 77 times; 10,000 talents represents many years' wages; strong language, such as "wicked slave;" being tortured for not paying a debt)

Ask, "Why do you think exaggerations were used in this parable? What do these examples tell us about God's forgiveness?" (*It has no limits.*)

Optional story activity:

Retell the story from Matthew 18:21–35 using the following object lesson. Note: Practice the activity before demonstrating to the class.

- You will need three bowls filled with water, a small container of pepper, and a small bottle of dishwashing liquid.
- Place the bowls of water on the table where all can see.
- Shake some pepper over the surface of the water in the first bowl as you tell about the servant who owed lots of money. Say the pepper represents all the money he owed. When you tell that the king forgave the debt, put one drop of dishwashing liquid in the center of the bowl. (*The pepper will rush to the edges of the bowl.*) Explain that the servant now owed nothing. The king chose to push the debt aside and forgive it. The debt was no longer what was most important in their relationship.
- Sprinkle pepper in the center of the second bowl to represent the debt owed to the first servant by the

second servant. Tell how the servant demanded payment from the other man, even though the man owed him only a little money. The poorer servant could not pay, and the ungrateful servant punished him instead of forgiving the debt, because he loved money more than people. (*Do not put the liquid soap in this bowl.*) If we do not add forgiveness, we allow the debt to overshadow the relationship.

- Sprinkle pepper in the third bowl. The pepper represents the things we do that hurt others and God. Like the king, God is willing to forgive us no matter what we do, or how many times we need to be forgiven.
- But sometimes other people hurt us. (*Give examples.*) If we do not forgive them, our hearts hold on to those things and get full of anger, and we hurt even more inside. God wants us to forgive others just like God forgives us. Put one drop of dishwashing liquid in the center of the bowl. When we forgive, it pushes away the darkness, and our hearts can be filled with peace.

## 3 RESPOND

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

One of Community of Christ's Enduring Principles is Grace and Generosity. God's forgiveness, or grace, is without limit...no matter what! God is more generous than we can imagine in forgiving us, and God wants us to be generous in forgiving others.

Read together and memorize the following statement.

**God's grace, revealed in Jesus Christ, is generous and unconditional.**

Give each student a half sheet of paper and provide crayons or markers. Have them write the above statement and decorate, or illustrate what it means to them.

## 4 SEND

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

Invite students to complete the following action challenge:

As God is generous, I will generously forgive \_\_\_\_\_.

## 5 BLESS

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

Close by reading or singing "As God Is Joy" CCS 366.

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 20)

LESSON 44  
24 September 2017

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 20:1–16

**Lesson Focus:** God extends grace freely and generously to all.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- experience justice and sharing.
- discuss the scripture story and God's generosity.
- explore ways they can be generous.

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 20:1–16 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 105, available through Herald House.

## Supplies

- *Community of Christ Sings*
- (Optional) Individually wrapped candy (enough for each student to have at least two pieces)
- Video "The Butterfly Effect" <http://www.CofChrist.org/resources?tags=English-Home-Resource#/1859/disciples-generous-response---the-butterfly-effect>

## 1 GATHER

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

If individually wrapped candy is available, distribute candy according to age (each age gets a different number of candy pieces).

Ask the following questions:

- Is it fair to give out candy according to age? Why or why not?
- What would be a fair way to distribute the candy? Invite students to distribute the candy according to what they think is fair.

Invite students to enjoy one piece of candy, but share additional piece(s) of candy with someone else after class.

Sing "For Thy Gracious Blessing" CCS 126 or "I've (We've) Got So Much to Be Thankful For" (*words included; see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G21RCo8w0HA> for demonstration of the song*).

We've got so much, so much, so much, so much,  
so much,  
So much, so much, so much, so much, so much,  
So much, so much, so much (clap)  
To be thankful for.

We've got \_\_\_\_\_ (insert whatever you are thankful for here)  
To be thankful for.  
We've got \_\_\_\_\_  
To be thankful for.

We've got so much, so much, so much, so much,  
so much,  
So much, so much, so much, so much, so much,  
So much, so much, so much (clap)  
To be thankful for.

(Repeat verse and chorus as needed)

—By Ray Watson, © 2005 Ray Watson

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Have students take turns reading Matthew 20:1–16.

<sup>1</sup>"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup>After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his

vineyard. <sup>3</sup>When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; <sup>4</sup>and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. <sup>5</sup>When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. <sup>6</sup>And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' <sup>7</sup>They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' <sup>8</sup>When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' <sup>9</sup>When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. <sup>10</sup>Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. <sup>11</sup>And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, <sup>12</sup>saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' <sup>13</sup>But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?' <sup>14</sup>Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. <sup>15</sup>Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' <sup>16</sup>So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Discuss the following questions:

- What seemed fair or unfair about the master paying all the workers the same amount?
- Do you think the worker that started last should have been paid the same as the first worker? Why or why not?
- Did the master pay everyone what he promised them?
- What is the meaning of "the last will be first, and the first will be last"?

Form groups of two or three. Ask each group to determine what or who the following represent: master (God), workers (people), payment (love and forgiveness). Compare responses with the larger group.

Because God loves all people, God extends God's grace freely and generously to all people...no matter what! As God is generous, disciples are called to be generous as well.

## 3 RESPOND

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

Community of Christ upholds six principles of A Disciple's Generous Response. Principle 4 states, "A disciple shares generously through tithing so others may experience God's generosity." How we respond with our time, talent, treasure, and testimony makes a difference in the lives of others.

Show the video "The Butterfly Effect" <http://www.CofChrist.org/resources?tags=English-Home-Resource#/1859/disciples-generous-response---the-butterfly-effect>.

Talk about what Joelle Wight describes as the butterfly effect. In groups of two or three, have youth come up with examples of small acts that work together for good in the world. These may be examples students have witnessed, read or heard about, or examples of what could be possible. Share ideas with the larger group.

## 4 SEND

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

Invite students to take one of the examples or ideas shared and complete the following action challenge.

I will share \_\_\_\_\_ (example of time, talent, treasure, or testimony) and combine with the gifts of others to \_\_\_\_\_.

## 5 BLESS

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

Close with a popcorn prayer by beginning a prayer statement and having students shout their responses at any time.

Examples: Thank you, God, for...  
I will generously share...  
Amen!

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 21)

LESSON 45  
1 October 2017

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 21:23–32

**Lesson Focus:** Jesus wants us to do more than talk about his mission; he wants us to live his mission!

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- sing about following Jesus.
- act out the scripture story and talk about Responsible Choices to help others.
- explore the Mission Prayer and how it helps us respond in Christ's mission.

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 21:23–32 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 106, available through Herald House.

## Supplies

- *Community of Christ Sings*
- (Optional) *Community of Christ Sings* Audio Recording available from Herald House
- Copies of Readers' Theater script
- Copies of Mission Prayer
- (Optional) Video: Open Your Eyes at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHRTBccnAW8&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHRTBccnAW8&feature=youtu.be)
- Crayons or markers

## 1 GATHER

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

Introduce the song "Fanana" CCS 596 which comes from Malawi. Fanana means "be like Jesus" in Chichewa. Subsequent verses mean "walk, sleep, sing, dance, talk like Jesus." Ask, "What have you done this week to be like Jesus?"

Teach students the song in Chichewa. For the first line, the teacher sings the main text; students respond with "Fanana." Then sing the second line together. After students understand the flow of the song, sing the other stanzas. Note: Don't worry about feeling confident with all pronunciations; focus on the meaning of the song and the importance of learning songs from different cultures.

Optional: Sing along with, or listen to, the Audio Recording, available from Herald House.

## 2 ENGAGE

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

Every day we can choose how we will live like Jesus. We cannot just talk about Jesus; we must also act like Jesus.

Reader's Theater

Invite students to read and act out Matthew 21:23–32 (see p. 11). Assign the following parts: Jesus, two chief priests, father (or parent), son (or daughter), son (or daughter).

After reading or acting out the scripture, discuss the following questions:

- Which one of the children in the parable talked like Jesus?
- Which child acted like Jesus?
- Which one made the better choice? Explain.

In the story, the religious rulers were upset with Jesus because he associated with people they considered sinners. Jesus was kind to all people, regardless of their choices or how they lived. The religious rulers talked about living God's way, but they didn't live God's way.

Jesus doesn't want us to talk about his mission; he wants us to live his mission! Ask, "Can you remember the five Mission Initiatives in Community of Christ?"

- Invite People to Christ
- Abolish Poverty, End Suffering
- Pursue Peace
- Develop Disciples to Serve
- Experience Congregations in Mission

Ask, "What are some specific things we can do to live Christ's mission through the Mission Initiatives?"

### 3 RESPOND

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

Provide copies of the Mission Prayer. Tell students many people throughout Community of Christ are using the Mission Prayer to listen for God and follow Jesus in his mission. Invite youth to take turns reading portions of the Mission Prayer as follows.

Read: **God, where will your Spirit lead today?**

Ask, "The Holy Spirit helps us listen for God and make choices. What does lead mean? How do you think the Holy Spirit can lead us?"

Read: **Help me be fully awake and ready to respond.**

Ask, "What can you do to be fully awake and ready to respond?"

Read: **Grant me courage to risk something new...**

Ask, "When have you had courage to try something new?"

Read: **...and become a blessing of your love and peace.**

Ask, "How can we bless people? How can we share love and peace?"

Optional Video: *Open Your Eyes*

Find the video at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHRTBccnAW8&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHRTBccnAW8&feature=youtu.be).

Ask:

- What did the jogger do that changed how he noticed others?
- What did the jogger do that took courage?
- How was the jogger a blessing of love and peace?
- What else happened in the video that shows what it means to be a blessing of love and peace?

### 4 SEND

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

Provide crayons or markers and have students illustrate how they can live Christ's love and mission on the back of their copy of the Mission Prayer. Share responses with the larger group.

### 5 BLESS

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

Sing or listen to "Fanana" CCS 596.

## *Readers' Theater*

Matthew 21:23–32

Setting the scene: Jesus and chief priests are on one side of the narrator; parent and children are on the other side.

Narrator: When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching.

Chief Priest 1: By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?

Jesus: I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?

Narrator: And they argued with one another.

Chief Priest 2: If we say, "From heaven," he will say to us, "Why then did you not believe him?" But if we say, "Of human origin," we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.

Chief Priests: We do not know.

Jesus: Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said,

Parent: Son, go and work in the vineyard today.

Child 1: I will not.

Jesus: But later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered,

Child 2: I will go, sir.

Jesus: But he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?

Chief Priests: The first.

Jesus: Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

All: (Scene ends; take a bow.)

*MISSION PRAYER*

*God, where will your Spirit lead today?  
Help me be fully awake and ready to respond.*

*Grant me courage to risk something new  
and become a blessing of your love and peace.*

*Amen.*

*MISSION PRAYER*

*God, where will your Spirit lead today?  
Help me be fully awake and ready to respond.*

*Grant me courage to risk something new  
and become a blessing of your love and peace.*

*Amen.*

*MISSION PRAYER*

*God, where will your Spirit lead today?  
Help me be fully awake and ready to respond.*

*Grant me courage to risk something new  
and become a blessing of your love and peace.*

*Amen.*

*MISSION PRAYER*

*God, where will your Spirit lead today?  
Help me be fully awake and ready to respond.*

*Grant me courage to risk something new  
and become a blessing of your love and peace.*

*Amen.*

*MISSION PRAYER*

*God, where will your Spirit lead today?  
Help me be fully awake and ready to respond.*

*Grant me courage to risk something new  
and become a blessing of your love and peace.*

*Amen.*

*MISSION PRAYER*

*God, where will your Spirit lead today?  
Help me be fully awake and ready to respond.*

*Grant me courage to risk something new  
and become a blessing of your love and peace.*

*Amen.*

*MISSION PRAYER*

*God, where will your Spirit lead today?  
Help me be fully awake and ready to respond.*

*Grant me courage to risk something new  
and become a blessing of your love and peace.*

*Amen.*

*MISSION PRAYER*

*God, where will your Spirit lead today?  
Help me be fully awake and ready to respond.*

*Grant me courage to risk something new  
and become a blessing of your love and peace.*

*Amen.*

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 22)

LESSON 46  
8 October 2017

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 21:33–46

**Lesson Focus:** Jesus teaches us to love God, love others, and work together to create shalom.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- listen to and share stories that teach a lesson.
- discuss the scripture passage and learn about God's shalom.
- experience working together to create shalom.

## Supplies

- Favorite story to read or tell
- (Optional) Variety of recycled magazines and scissors
- Large sheet of paper and glue
- Crayons or markers

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 21:33–46 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 107–108, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

**Note to teacher:** Be prepared to read or tell a favorite story of yours. It can be a Bible or Book of Mormon story, a favorite children's story, or a story about a special person in your life. Whether or not the story is true, it should be one that teaches a lesson.

Ask, "Does anyone have a favorite story? Tell us why this story is your favorite."

Say, "I am going to read (or tell) one of my favorite stories." After reading or telling the story, ask the students what lesson the story teaches.

A story doesn't have to be true (factual) to teach a lesson. Many of our lessons focus on parables Jesus used to teach lessons. The importance of these parables is not that they are historically correct, but that they are reliable in teaching us important lessons about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

## 2 ENGAGE

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

Invite students to take turns reading Matthew 21:33–46.

<sup>3</sup>"Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. <sup>34</sup>When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. <sup>35</sup>But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. <sup>36</sup>Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. <sup>37</sup>Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' <sup>38</sup>But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' <sup>39</sup>So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. <sup>40</sup>Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" <sup>41</sup>They said to him, "He will put

those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

<sup>42</sup>Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures:

‘The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone;  
this was the Lord’s doing,  
and it is amazing in our eyes’?

<sup>43</sup>Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. <sup>44</sup>The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

<sup>45</sup>When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. <sup>46</sup>They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

On a large writing surface, make two columns with the following lists:

Landowner	Fruits of the Kingdom
Farmers	God
Servants	Jesus
Landowner’s son	Moses, David, Elijah, Isaiah
Grapes	People of Israel

Read the parable a second time and ask students to think about the characters (listed in the first column) and who or what they represent (match to the second column). After reading a second time, have students match the characters from the parable with the ones they represent in the second column. Talk about why they matched as they did.

In this parable that Jesus told, the landowner represents God. God sent leaders and prophets (servants) such as Moses, David, Elijah, and Isaiah to tell the people of Israel (farmers) about God’s love and how to live in right relationship with God and others. Finally, God sent Jesus (son) to teach the people. God gave them a second chance, and a third; but they rejected Jesus as well. Jesus told his listeners, “The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produce the fruits of the kingdom.” Jesus teaches us to love God, ourselves, and others; and we must also work together to produce

“fruits of the kingdom,” which is God’s shalom (peace and wholeness).

### 3 RESPOND

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

Community of Christ believes that God’s vision of creation is shalom, a vision of reconciliation, salvation, wholeness, justice, and peace. Shalom is a Hebrew word meaning a fullness or completeness of peace. “God yearns to establish a lasting covenant of peace with humankind and with all of creation as a way to make shalom a reality” (“We Share a Vision for Creation,” *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 4).

Provide a variety of magazines and invite students to find and cut out a picture of something that illustrates shalom. Share pictures with the full group and explain why they selected the image. On a large piece of paper, write “Shalom” in the middle and create a collage with the images of shalom.

### 4 SEND

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

In today’s parable Jesus teaches about the importance of “bearing fruit of the kingdom.” We are called to work with other disciples to create shalom. Provide crayons or markers and invite each student to write on the collage what they will do to work for shalom. Display the collage in the class space or in a place in the church where all can see.

### 5 BLESS

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

Start a sentence prayer and have each student complete the prayer with what they have added to the collage.

Thank you, God, for sending Jesus to teach us about your love. Help us create shalom by sharing \_\_\_\_\_ . Amen.

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 23)

LESSON 47  
15 October 2017

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 22:1–14

**Lesson Focus:** We must come to God prepared to celebrate God’s purpose, or we will miss the blessing.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- talk about clothing that represents special events or professions.
- discuss the scripture story and Community of Christ mission statement.
- illustrate ways of sharing joy, hope, love, and peace.

## Supplies

- (Optional) Images of different wedding clothes and uniforms; find on internet or in magazines
- Paper and crayons or markers
- (Optional) Large rolls of paper

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 22:1–14 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 109, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Show images of different wedding clothes and uniforms. Have students identify what activity or profession the clothing items represent and why they are worn. If images are not available from magazines or the internet, invite the students to draw or describe an item of clothing that represents an activity or profession and talk about why the particular clothing is used.

Ask, “Have you received an invitation to a special event? Tell us about that event. Were you expected to wear something special? Explain.”

## 2 ENGAGE

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

For several weeks we have learned about parables Jesus used to teach about God’s love and how to live as disciples of Jesus. Today’s story is another parable Jesus used to teach his disciples.

Invite the students to take turns reading Matthew 22:1–14.

<sup>1</sup>Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying:  
<sup>2</sup> “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. <sup>3</sup>He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. <sup>4</sup>Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ <sup>5</sup>But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, <sup>6</sup>while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. <sup>7</sup>The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. <sup>8</sup>Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup>Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ <sup>10</sup>Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

<sup>11</sup> “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, <sup>12</sup>and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And

he was speechless. <sup>13</sup>Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' <sup>14</sup>For many are called, but few are chosen."

Discuss the following questions:

- What is troubling or challenging about this passage? *(Responses will vary. It is important to provide space for freely discussing difficult imagery such as slavery, violence, murder, and being thrown into outer darkness. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus uses hyperbole and strong language to emphasize the importance of inclusive mission for the sake of all. That does not mean strong language and imagery should be dismissed as merely hyperbole, nor should it be taken literally.)*
- Whom do you think the king represents in this story? *(God)*
- What does the wedding banquet represent? *(shalom, blessings, joy, love, God's kingdom)*
- Why was the king angry? *(He prepared a great banquet or party, and the intended guests did not attend.)*
- What did the king do next? *(invited people who are not usually invited to banquets)*
- In Matthew's story, why was one man thrown out of the party? *(He did not wear the appropriate wedding robe.)*
- God wants all people to experience joy, hope, love, and peace. In Community of Christ, how is this expressed? *(Responses will vary: Enduring Principles, Worth of All Persons, Mission Initiatives, mission statement.)*

### 3 RESPOND

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

The mission statement of Community of Christ is:

**We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.**

Ask the students to describe what this statement means to them. How does it express who we are and whom we are called to be?

Just as the guests were expected to wear wedding robes to the banquet, Jesus invites us to live as disciples who share joy, hope, love, and peace with everyone. We need to "clothe ourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:27). This doesn't mean actual clothing items; it means preparing ourselves with attitudes and actions that promote joy, hope, love, and peace. What are some things we can do to prepare ourselves at home or at church?

Provide paper and crayons or markers and have students draw images of how they can represent Jesus Christ and share joy, hope, love, and peace.

Optional activity: If large rolls of paper are available, have students lie on the paper while other students trace the outlines of their bodies. Have each student "clothe him or herself" in ways that represent sharing joy, hope, love, and peace. Post the images around the room and invite students to add words of support and encouragement around each figure.

### 4 SEND

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

Invite the students to show and describe their images, and tell how they will share joy, hope, love, or peace with others this week.

### 5 BLESS

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

Invite a student to offer a closing prayer, or offer the following prayer.

Dear God,  
Help us be prepared for your celebration of shalom.  
Help us invite others to Christ by sharing joy, hope, love, and peace. Amen.