Signal Communities...  
**Reflect Christ’s Peace**

**Session 1**

**Session Focus**  
To understand that signal communities reflect the peace of Jesus Christ

**Focus Scripture**  
The disciples are sent into the world to spread the good news of Jesus Christ and build signal communities of justice and peace.  
—Doctrine and Covenants 163:5a, adapted for children

**Objectives**  
*The learner will...*

• understand what signal communities are.

• discover how signal communities reflect Christ’s peace.

• hear scripture that describes signal community.

• connect how signal communities they belong to signal the peace of Jesus Christ.

**Materials**

• Large paper or poster board with the words *CHRIST’S PEACE* written on it and cut into puzzle pieces (one piece for each group of two to five people)

• Pencils and markers

• One candle, matches, and a glass jar tall enough to cover the candle

• The word pattern, “You are the salt from the earth, O people: salt for the kingdom of God!” written on chart paper or white board

**Resources**

• Sing For Peace (SP) hymnal

• Bible (New Revised Standard Version)

• Doctrine and Covenants

For tips and guidelines on teaching an all ages group, access “Planning for All Ages” on the Disciple Formation Guide at www.CofChrist.org/dfg/resources/pdf/Planning4all_ages_together.pdf

**Gather**

Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson.

Welcome everyone to the all ages activity where they will explore signal communities and how we can reflect Christ’s peace.

**Peace Prayer Puzzle**

Write the words *CHRIST’S PEACE* on large paper or poster board. Cut the paper or poster board into smaller pieces to create a puzzle. Give each group of two to five people a piece of the puzzle and a pencil or crayon (pastel). Ask them to write or draw on their puzzle pieces three things they believe keep us from experiencing peace. Next, have them write or draw three things that could bring us closer to Christ’s peace. Their examples might include: conflicts between people, attitudes, the state of the world, prayer, friends, location, governments, transportation, or families. Then have them write a prayer asking for God’s help in sharing Christ’s peace. The youngest children might add a peaceful color, such as light blue, pale purple, or light green. Put the pieces together to spell the words *CHRIST’S PEACE*. As each person or group puts their piece in place, give them time to read their prayer aloud if they like. Read the following scripture passage: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid” (John 14:27 NRSV, adapted).
Signal Community Defined
Explain that signal communities share Christ’s peace in the world. A signal community is one that follows Christ’s way of living and is an example to others. It is an important part of God’s shalom. A community like this expresses the hope of Zion, which is defined in scripture as a city on a hill, a sign of peace; where you can find your inner peace, but also where we live with others in loving relationships which are just and fair, where we can forgive and work out problems with others, where there is no poverty, and where we live in harmony with nature. It can be a real place, a place that we can help to create. Consider this definition of signal communities:

Signal communities positively deviate from trends and conditions in society that are contrary to God’s will for creation. They reveal a way of living that is a glimpse, demonstration, foothold, or foretaste of the peaceable reign of God on earth. Such communities provide a shining witness that the hope of the gospel is not wishful idealism. Conditions in creation can become better, more harmonious, and peaceful when we given tangible expression to the vision of Christ.


Why is a community that reflects Christ’s peace called a signal community?

Signal Community Demonstration
On a table or flat surface, light a candle. Ask everyone to observe the light it gives. Ask someone to turn off the lights in the room or darken the room in some way. Ask the group to describe the difference in the degree of light the candle gives now that the room is dark. Turn on the lights, and place a clear glass jar over the candle. Tell everyone to keep an eye on the candle as you discuss the light and dark in the first experiment and how the light can be compared to the peace of Jesus in our lives. The candle flame will eventually be extinguished due to the lack of oxygen. Call attention to it if no one notices it first.

• When is the unlit candle like our lives?

Invite someone from the group to read aloud Matthew 5:14–16.

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Bring Forth the Kingdom of God!
Further explore signal communities through song. Sing together “Bring Forth the Kingdom” (SP 9). Try having one person sing the part marked Leader in the song and have the group respond by singing the part marked All.

Talk together about what is happening in the signal community described by the song—salt providing the flavor of life, light shining holy and bright, seeds growing mercy and justice, and people loving.
3 Respond
Takes the learners from hearing to doing.

Signal Community Metaphors
From the song “Bring Forth the Kingdom” (SP 9), display the pattern: “You are the salt for the earth, O people: salt for the kingdom of God!” on chart paper or whiteboard for the whole group to see. Invite small groups to imagine together their own metaphors explaining who they are or could be in their signal communities. For example, “You are a voice for the poor, O people: voices for the kingdom of God.” or “You are a friend to the lost, O people: friends in the kingdom of God.” Give each group markers or crayons (pastels) and large newsprint or poster board on which to write and illustrate their metaphors. Then allow time for each group to practice saying (or shouting) their metaphors together. Bring the large group together and ask each small group to “show and tell” their posters to the others.

4 Send
Explores how the lesson might be lived out.

While standing in a circle, invite each person to mention one signal community they are a part of and share how it does or could exemplify the peace of Jesus Christ. For example, “I belong to a choir and our singing helps those who hear feel God’s love and the peace of Jesus Christ.”

5 Bless
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope.

Stand together as a signal community as you pray this prayer or one of your own: “We thank you, O God, for the gift of your love we feel at this moment. We invite you to be our ever-present guide as we try to live your purpose and shine as a community that signals your peace and justice. Amen.”
Session Focus
To explore how signal communities embrace continuing revelation.

Focus Scripture
Romans 12:1–2

Objectives
The learner will...

• learn that growing in the understanding of God’s will is called continuing revelation.

• understand that God’s will can be revealed through scripture, prayer, or experiences.

• hear a scripture story about the prophet Elijah hearing God’s voice.

Materials
• Chart paper or a white board

• Markers or crayons (pastels)

• One piece of drawing paper for each person

Resources

• Book of Mormon

• Doctrine and Covenants

Welcome everyone to the all ages activity where we will explore together the enduring principle Continuing Revelation. God is continually revealed through scripture, through prayer, and through our experiences or the experiences of others.

Continuing Revelation
Label columns on chart paper or a whiteboard: “Scripture,” “Prayer,” “Experiences.” Ask the group “How does God speak to you?” or “How do you hear God's call?” As different people respond, write their thoughts under one of the three columns.

Point out that Community of Christ has a prophet, but is also a prophetic people. Everyone has the responsibility to try to understand God’s will. As we grow in our understanding of the discipleship practices of scripture and theological study, spiritual formation (including prayer), and sharing experiences through witnessing and storytelling we will gain helpful tools.
Continuing Revelation

Sit in a circle as you explain that growing in understanding God’s will is called continuing revelation. God speaks through scripture stories, when you pray and listen for God, or when you listen to others tell their stories about their relationships with God. Show the books of scripture used in Community of Christ: Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants. Explain that hearing and studying these scriptures is one way God’s will is revealed or understood.

Scripture Study

Read or tell the scripture story from 1 Kings 19:9–13, or from the Lectionary Story Bible, Year A, p. 177. Explain that this is an example of understanding God better through scripture. Elijah was afraid he would be killed like other prophets, so he ran away and hid in a cave to escape. Three times he heard what he thought was God’s voice: once in a strong wind, once in a mighty earthquake, and once in a huge, crackling fire, but none of those was God’s voice. Finally when he heard God’s voice, it was in the sound of complete silence. There was so much noise around Elijah that it was hard for him to know what he was hearing.

- What did you learn about God by listening to this story?
- What is your favorite scripture story that helps you understand God better?
- Elijah went to the top of the mountain to listen for God. Where do you go when you need direction or light from God?

Pray and Listen for God

In the early 1800s Joseph Smith Jr., the founder of the Restoration movement, went alone to a grove of trees when he was concerned about being a disciple of Jesus Christ. He wanted to pray and listen to God. Give each person a sheet of paper and provide crayons (pastels) or markers. Have them draw a picture of their personal space or spaces (it’s okay to have more than one) where they go to listen for God. Come together as a group and take turns describing some of the experiences each has had in their special places. How have their actions or choices changed by taking time to go into their personal “grove” to speak to and listen for God?

Sharing Experiences

Have you ever had a strong feeling to do something for others—such as introduce yourself to a new neighbor, give a stranger directions, talk to a new kid at school, or help in some other way? Did you listen to that feeling and respond? Could that have been God urging you to share the peace of Jesus Christ? Pair with someone in your group and share your stories and experiences of God urging you to help others. Pay close attention to those stories. It may be one of God’s ways of speaking to you!
**Send**
Explores how the lesson might be lived out.

**Take a Closer Look**
Ask everyone to stand in a circle with one volunteer standing still in the center. Ask everyone to look closely at the person in the middle and count the number of eyes they see from their position. Do they see one eye, two, or none? What you see depends on your perspective. Be open to new ways of seeing and hearing God. Be willing to let the Holy Spirit inspire you and help you understand God’s revelation.

**Bless**
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope.

Stand together as you pray this prayer or one of your own: “O Lord, we praise you for continually revealing your loving nature. Help us listen for your voice and give us courage to be bold in our response. In Jesus’ name, amen.”
Signal Communities...
Make Responsible Choices

Session 3

Session Focus
To understand that God calls us to make responsible choices that contribute to God’s purposes.

Focus Scripture
Romans 12:9–13

Objectives
The learner will...
• recognize that God gives humans the ability to make choices.
• hear a scripture story about living God’s way.
• understand that our choices can make us and the world better or worse.

Materials
• Two large signs, one with the word “yes”; the other with the word “no”
• Tape
• If needed, paper and markers or crayons (pastels)
• One blindfold
• Duct tape
• Many items that symbolize “want.” For example, a DVD case, an MP3 player, a shoe, a toy, a poster, holiday decorations
• One small stone for each person
• One container of water in which to toss the stones

Resources

Welcome everyone to the all ages activity where we will explore together the enduring principle Responsible Choices. God gives us the ability to make choices and calls us to make responsible choices that contribute to God’s purposes.

Yes or No?
Attach two large signs, one with the word “yes”; the other with the word “no”; to opposite ends of your gathering place. Ask your group several “yes or no” questions with obvious “right” answers. For example, “Should you eat healthy foods?” “Should you leave garbage outside after a picnic?” “Should you help people when they ask?” Have group members stand under the sign that answers each question. Now ask questions that don’t have clear “yes” or “no” answers. For example, “Should you stay up late?” “Should you walk instead of ride in a car?” “Should you turn off lights?” Point out that God gives people the ability to make choices. Our choices can make our lives and the world better or worse. God calls us to make responsible choices that contribute to God’s purposes.
Live God’s Way
Read or tell the scripture story from Isaiah 1:10–20, or from the Lectionary Story Bible, Year C, p. 183. Isaiah was a prophet in Bible times. In this story Isaiah heard people singing loud songs and heard them saying loud prayers. The people thought their songs and prayers made God happy. Isaiah smelled the sweet-smelling incense the people burned and the roasted meat they cooked. The people thought God would like those smells. Isaiah talked to the people and told them none of it pleased God—their loud songs, their long prayers, their burned incense. The people asked Isaiah what they should do. Isaiah answered, “God has told you what it means to live God’s way.”

• What do you think it means to “live God’s way”?

• What are the choices you make or could make each day that help creation—people and nature?

Responsible Use
Invite each person in the group to place on a large table one object they own. The objects can be anything from cell phones to car keys, library cards, and money—whatever they have at the moment. Have paper and markers or crayons (pastels) available for people who have no items with them to draw something they own. Blindfold each person in turn, turn them around, mix up the table objects, and have them pick up the first object or drawing they touch on the table. Have them identify the object, and with the blindfold off, describe an irresponsible use of that object in relation to another person (such as lending your car keys to an underage driver), and then a responsible use of that object that contributes to God’s purposes (such as using your car to give someone a ride to church). After everyone has had a chance, discuss the impact of responsible choices in relationships.

Forever Mine
To help dramatize the concept of want versus need, while talking to the group about responsible choices, use duct tape to attach items to a volunteer’s clothing. For example, a DVD case, an old cell phone, a shoe, a toy, a poster, holiday decorations—anything that symbolizes a “want.” Imagine that every material item you buy, receive, or that ends up in your possession, has to stay with you forever. What would your space be like if you still had every non-food item you ever owned? Think about items you recently acquired or received. Did you absolutely need every one? Before you buy or accept more things, consider the long-term implications. Is it something you will use right away or is it an investment? Is it recyclable or will it eventually be discarded?
The Ripple Effect
God gives humans the ability to make choices. Invite everyone to pick up a stone and hold it in the palms of their hands. Feel its size and shape. Feel how time has left its mark on the stone. Think about how long this stone has been on Earth. Take turns dropping stones into a container of water. Watch the ripples each stone makes. The falling stone causes a reaction in the water. Are some ripples bigger than others? How long does it take until the water is still again? What ripples have your choices made in your life, the lives of others, and the world? The ripples of your actions go on and on. Your choices contribute to good or evil in your life, in the lives of others, and in the world.

Stand together as you pray this prayer or one of your own: “Restore in us your Spirit, dear Lord that our choices may be in harmony with all creation. This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.”
**Session Focus**
To understand that God wants shalom (justice, reconciliation, well-being, wholeness, and peace) for all of creation. Jesus Christ reveals the meaning of God’s peace.

**Focus Scripture**
Romans 12:14–21

**Objectives**
The learner will...
- understand that shalom means justice, reconciliation, well-being, wholeness, and peace.
- hear a scripture story to help their understanding of God’s peace.
- think of ways to connect God’s peace to the world today.
- engage in quiet listening.

**Materials**
- Many different colors of clay—enough to give each person a good-sized piece
- Chart paper or whiteboard. On it write the letters of the alphabet in a column on the left side of the page leaving space to write beside each letter
- Markers
- Paper and pencils or pens

**Resources**
- *Sing a New Song (NS)* songbook

**Gather**
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson.

Welcome everyone to the all ages activity where we will explore together the enduring principle Pursuit of Peace (Shalom). God wants shalom (justice, reconciliation, well-being, wholeness, and peace) for all of creation.

**Peace Be with You**
Give each person a piece of colored clay. Distribute as many different colors as possible. Ask group members to create something with the clay that expresses who they are or what they like. Invite all who care to share about their creation. Then put all the clay into one ball. Ask the group to observe the different colors and see it symbolically as the spirit of shalom (peace with justice, wholeness, and living in right relationships with God, one another, and all creation). As all come together for the common cause of peace, individual characteristics blend and work together, yet those individual characteristics are not lost.
Peace from Parables
Jesus used parables to teach his disciples. Read or tell the parable, from Luke 12:13–31 or from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year C*, p. 181, describing how Jesus helped his disciples understand the meaning of God’s peace. The story is about a rich man who had so much success that he was going to tear down a storage facility to build a bigger one to hoard his wealth. It seems he wanted to store up all his things so they’d be there when he was ready for them. God called the man a fool. God said something like this to the rich man. “What are you going to do with all this stuff if you die? You can’t take it with you.” God’s shalom focuses on the positive, on good things that God provides, not on fear and worry.

- What did the rich man believe would bring him peace?
- How much of your life is focused on fear and worry about food, money, friends, health, and belonging? What other worries?
- How would your life be different if you shifted the focus of your life from worry to living God’s way?

Least Likely Friend
We are involved with many “strangers” whose behavior or choices may be uncomfortable for us; they may be “different” because of ability or disability, opportunity or lack of, position, profession, popularity, political or theological views, socioeconomic status, or a wide range of other differences. Ask individual class members to identify their stranger, their least-likely friend? Who comes to mind first? Write their name or their description on a small piece of paper. In pairs take turns telling each other what is uncomfortable for you about your least-likely friend. What can you do to overcome that discomfort? What skills might you need, or what support might be helpful? What could go wrong? What could be the positive outcome? Keep the piece of paper with you as a reminder of our call to pursue peace with all we meet.

Send
Ask the group to create an alphabet of peace. For each letter of the alphabet, identify and comment on a word that begins with that letter and is related to pursuing peace in today’s world. Write it on the chart paper or whiteboard. For example, Z is for Zion the peaceable kingdom where we share God’s peace. Another option is to divide into four smaller groups and assign six or seven alphabet letters to each group. Bring the group together to combine ideas for the entire alphabet.
The Gift of a Peaceful Heart

Explain to any children in your group that they now have an opportunity to use their ability to imagine. Then lead your group through this time of quiet listening: “Focus your attention on your heart as it beats faithfully inside your chest. What do you carry in your heart now? Does your heart area feel tight and closed or open and relaxed? Do you feel at peace, or are you focusing on problems and fears? How connected or disconnected do you feel to God’s love for you? Listen to your heart for a few minutes. Place one hand over the center of your chest and ask God to bless your heart as you imagine:

- God’s light flowing through your hand into your chest and heart
- The light of Christ surrounding, healing, and softening your heart
- God’s healing light growing and filling your chest—then leaving your heart to touch others

Take a moment to listen to your heart again. Close your meditation by thanking God for giving you a heart of flesh and filling you with light. Invite the group to hold the hands of those beside them as the song “Soften My Heart” NS 47 is read or sung together.
Welcome everyone to the all ages activity where we will explore together the enduring principle Sacredness of Creation and the call to join with God in caring for all creation.

Psalm 148
Invite someone to expressively read aloud Psalm 148 in which all creation is called to join in praise of the Lord—sea monsters, fire, hail, snow, frost, stormy winds, mountains, hills, fruit trees, wild animals, flying birds, kings of the Earth, and all peoples—all are called to praise God. As a group work together to write your own psalm by finishing the phrase, “I see nature praise God when...” For example, “I see nature praise God when the snow gives way and melts under the powerful rays of the sun.” Come up with as many examples as possible. Have the group stand and together offer their psalm to God.
Signal Communities...Live Christ’s Mission

Takes the learners from hearing to doing.

Read aloud the explanation of the Sacredness of Creation enduring principle:

“In the beginning, God created and called it all good. Spirit and material, seen and unseen, are related. Creation’s power to create or destroy reminds us of our vulnerability in this life. God is still creating to fulfill divine purpose. We join with God as stewards of care and hope for all creation.”


Then read aloud Doctrine and Covenants 163:4b: “The earth, lovingly created as an environment for life to flourish, shudders in distress because creation’s natural and living systems are becoming exhausted from carrying the burden of human greed and conflict. Humankind must awaken from its illusion of independence and unrestrained consumption without lasting consequences.”

• In what ways do you see the Earth “shuddering in distress”?

• The enduring principle Sacredness of Creation calls all to “join with God as stewards of care and hope for all creation.” What is one way you can be a steward for creation?

• Why is each seed, each drop of water, each breath of wind sacred?

Invites exploration and interaction.

Engage

Divide into small groups and ask each group to think about a mosaic design (small pieces used to create a pattern or picture) that shows the sacredness of creation. Have one person in the group draw an outline of the group’s idea. Then take turns applying white glue with fingertips to one section at a time. Start at the center and work toward the edges. Sprinkle each glued area with one kind of seed or bean. Plant the seeds of hope for all creation. Come together and ask each group to share the meaning of their mosaic. The mosaics need to dry for at least one hour.

Explores how the lesson might be lived out.

Send

As a group, take a nature walk with a spirit of gratitude and “holy attention.” At predetermined places along the walk, stop for prayer and meditation. At the end of the walk, write a “covenant with creation” for healing the wounds of the Earth. The covenant could include acts of Earth-keeping, such as recycling, simple living, and fasting from over-consumption of resources. Keep your paper as a reminder of the covenant you made with creation.

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope.

Bless

Stand together and sing “All Things Bright and Beautiful” HS 18.

Bless

Seeds of Hope Mosaic

Takes the learners from hearing to doing.

Respond

Then read aloud Doctrine and Covenants 163:4b: “The earth, lovingly created as an environment for life to flourish, shudders in distress because creation’s natural and living systems are becoming exhausted from carrying the burden of human greed and conflict. Humankind must awaken from its illusion of independence and unrestrained consumption without lasting consequences.”

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Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope.

Bless

Stand together and sing “All Things Bright and Beautiful” HS 18.
**Session Focus**
To reflect on what it means to speak and live Christ’s mission.

**Focus Scripture**
Doctrine and Covenants 164:9b

**Objectives**
*The learner will...*

- hear the mission statement of Jesus Christ in scripture.
- compare Christ’s mission statement to Community of Christ mission initiatives.
- think of ways to speak and live the mission of Jesus Christ.
- develop a personal mission statement in response to Jesus’ announcement and the mission initiatives.

**Materials**
- Chart paper or whiteboard with the question written across the top “What did Jesus proclaim?”
- Chart paper or whiteboard with the question written across the top “What are the mission initiatives of Community of Christ?”
- Several feet/meters of newsprint or roll paper
- Assorted markers or crayons (pastels)
- Tape
- Two wooden dowel rods approximately 10 in/25 cm long for each person
- One sheet of paper (letter/A4) for each person

**Resources**
- *By Request (R)* hymnal

**Welcome everyone**
Welcome everyone to the all ages activity where we will explore together the mission of Jesus Christ and the call to speak and live Christ’s mission.

**Compassion**
In pairs invite the group to tell their stories of a time when someone brought them hope and help, when someone was the hands or voice of Jesus Christ in their lives. Maybe it was a teacher who did something special, a nurse who cared for them when they were hurt or sick, or a friend who helped solve a problem. Both giving and receiving compassion—caring and bringing hope and help to others—is an important part of living Christ’s mission.
Jesus’ Mission Statement
Explore the story of Jesus Christ announcing his ministry by reading or telling the scripture story from Luke 4:16–21 or from the Lectionary Story Bible, Year C, p. 54. Jesus announced his ministry in the synagogue, reading the scripture for the day “as was his custom.” Jesus read a scripture passage from Isaiah that describes a servant who would restore God’s justice and peace. Jesus proclaimed this as his mission and set the direction for his followers. Community of Christ considers this as the “mission statement” for Jesus’ ministry.

- What did Jesus proclaim? (List the proclamations on designated chart paper or whiteboard.)
- Even though Jesus did not select the scripture reading for the day, how did it relate to his ministry?
- What does it mean for that scripture to be “fulfilled” today?


- What are these initiatives? (List the initiatives on designated chart paper or white board.)
- Compare the two lists. How are the mission initiatives similar to or the same as Jesus’?

Living the Mission of Jesus Banner
Attach several feet/meters of newsprint or roll paper around your gathering space; write “You Are Called to Change a Life” in large letters along the top. Make sure the banner is at an accessible height for all members. Space the group around the area providing plenty of colorful crayons (pastels) or markers. Have each person write a word or phrase or draw a picture about speaking or living the mission of Jesus Christ. Encourage them to be specific and to include their names. Encourage students to write as many mission ideas as they can think of. The group should easily be able to fill the paper. Start at the beginning of the banner and “take a tour” of all the ideas shown. Stop at each picture or word to connect it to speaking or living the mission of Jesus Christ. Add the words “The mission of Jesus Christ is what matters most for the journey ahead” (Doctrine and Covenants 164:9f) to the end of the banner.

My Mission Statement
Invite group members to reflect on their personal commitment in response to Jesus’ announcement and the mission initiatives.

- Where does your mission commitment currently take you as an individual and as a member of a group or community?
- What are the specific needs of the persons and groups to which you feel called to respond?
- Talk about the mission statement of Community of Christ: “We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.” How is Christ’s mission, our mission?

Provide materials for each person to make a scroll by taping paper to two dowel rods and rolling each side inward. Then have them write their own scrolls of proclamation using language of commitment “I will...” Be specific, for example, “I will help my friend who is an abusive relationship by “___” (doing what?). They may wish to share their scrolls with another person or the group, but without disclosing specific and personal information. Remind them to post their scrolls at home, or upload their commitments to their phones or computers.
Proclaim the Living Christ!
Sing “Community of Joy, Proclaim the Living Christ!” By Request 16. Divide into four groups. Ask each small group to sing or read aloud one of the stanzas. Have the whole group sing or read together stanza five.

Bless
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope.

Stand together as you pray this prayer or one of your own: “In every word of forgiveness O Lord—you are there. In every touch of compassion—you are there! In every act of justice—you are there! When we speak and live your mission, our world shines with your presence. Amen.”