



Community of Christ



COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS

ADULT

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 Mark).

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: The Worth of All Persons is shown in Jesus' healing ministries.

Objectives

The learners will...

- reflect on the Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons.
- discuss the unusual circumstances of two healing ministries recorded in Mark.
- explore how to respond with mission ministries.

Supplies

- Copies of Response Sheet (optional)
- Pens or pencils
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to instructor: 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)

In small groups or as a whole group, review the Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons (below). Share briefly a time when you (or someone you know) experienced God's wholeness of body, mind, spirit, or relationship.

- 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

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Read Mark 7:24–37. This text has two healing stories, each with unusual and difficult parts to explain. It takes place in Gentile territory away from the Jewish people Jesus serves. Discuss each story as a group or divide into smaller discussion groups. Share insights with the larger group.

Healing 1: The Syrophenician Woman's Faith (vv. 2–30)

A Gentile mother comes to Jesus on bended knee asking him to cast a demon from her young daughter. He responds, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." He is saying Jewish children deserve his healing and not this child, this "dog." In the Matthew version of the story Jesus says, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (15:24). It is shocking to read Jesus' answer to the mother's plea. Still, the mother is not discouraged and pleads for the children's crumbs. Jesus changes from denying the blessing to healing the child from afar.

- What is your reaction to this healing story?
- What do you think is going on in Jesus' ministry?

Healing 2: Jesus Cures a Deaf Man (vv. 31–37)

The second healing is for a deaf man with a speech impediment. It, too, takes place in private, away from the crowds, and by unusual methods. Jesus puts his fingers into the deaf man's ears, then spits on and touches his tongue. Jesus healed with spit in John 9. He made mud with saliva and spread it on a blind man's eyes. The man was sent to the pool of Siloam to wash and returned able to see (vv. 1–12). He looks to heaven and says, "Be opened." Immediately hearing is restored and the man is able to speak clearly. Then Jesus orders the man and his friends to tell no one. Despite Jesus' insistence, they proclaim, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

- What is your reaction to this healing story?
- What do you think is going on in Jesus' ministry?

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

There are three common missional aspects to the two healing stories. Divide the group into at least three smaller groups to discuss these focus areas. Depending on time, give one topic to each group. If time allows, rotate the topics among the groups.

- God's grace and healing is for all people. When Jesus heals the Syrophenician woman's child and the deaf man, he demonstrates the Worth of All Persons. How

can we share God's grace and healing? Or, in what ways can we show a person he or she is of worth?

- The active faith of friends and family brings healing. The mother helped her child, and the deaf man's friends took him and begged Jesus to heal him. How can you (we) advocate faithfully for our family and friends who are in need of healing?
- Healing brings transformation that must be shared. In the story of the woman, Jesus' view of his ministry is changed. He opens his mission to all people. When the deaf man is healed, he and his friends cannot stay silent. They must share their good news. How can you (we) speak passionately about God's healing message? Whom will you tell about the good news of God's healing love?

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

In small groups, or as a whole group, share an example of how you plan to uphold or restore the Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons this week. Or, with whom will you share the good news of God's healing grace this week?

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

Close by singing or reading "Peace of Jesus" CCS 318.

LESSON 41 RESPONSE SHEET

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 18)

9 September 2018

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

- Note, briefly, a time when you (or someone you know) experienced God's wholeness of body, mind, spirit, or relationship.

Mark 7:24–37

²⁴From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, ²⁵but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. ²⁶Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." ²⁸But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." ²⁹Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter." ³⁰So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

- What is your reaction to this healing story?
- What do you think is going on in Jesus' ministry?

³¹Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. ³²They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. ³³He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. ³⁴Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha", that is, "Be opened." ³⁵And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. ³⁶Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. ³⁷They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

- What is your reaction to this healing story?
- What do you think is going on in Jesus' ministry?

Share an example of how you plan to uphold or restore the Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons this next week. Or, with whom will you share the good news of God's healing grace?

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 19)

LESSON 42
16 September 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 8:27–38

Lesson Focus: Jesus calls faithful disciples to take up one's cross and to follow him.

Objectives

The learners will...

- reflect on what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.
- consider how Peter defines Messiah.
- explore the difference between focusing on human versus divine things.
- anticipate what it means to follow Jesus.
- integrate Community of Christ Enduring Principles and the "Commentary on Principles" with faithful discipleship.

Supplies

- Copies of Response Sheet (optional)
- *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition www.cofchrist.org/enduring-principles
- Copies of "Commentary on Principles" www.cofchrist.org/common/cms/resources/Official-Commentary-on-Principles.pdf
- Pens or pencils
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to instructor: 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)

Break into small groups of two or three. Share a brief one- or two-sentence response to the following question: What do you mean when you say, "I am a follower of Jesus Christ"?

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Read this overview:

The Gospel of Mark was likely written around 60 CE. It is

the earliest of the four Gospel writings. These verses fall in the middle of the Gospel. The disciples now know that Jesus is a gifted teacher and healer. After these verses, Jesus' ministries continue as he and his disciples travel toward Jerusalem, the cross, and the empty tomb. There are three focus areas in this text dealing with "who," "what," and "how."

Divide the class into small discussion groups, if the size allows. Follow these steps:

1. Have someone read the section of scripture to the group.
2. Either read or paraphrase the additional information provided below.
3. Ask the small-group members to briefly discuss the question(s) following each topic.
4. If time allows, ask each group to share, briefly, one or two new insights gained during their discussions.

Repeat the steps for each section.

Who Do People Say I Am? (vv. 27–29)

The Gospel of Mark begins Jesus' ministry with his baptism by John the Baptist (1:9–11) followed by time in the wilderness (1:12–13). Jesus then calls disciples and begins his healing and teaching ministries. The disciples live, walk, and work side by side with Jesus. They watch him teach, feed, and heal the neediest. The disciples are there when he talks with and about religious leaders. Jesus asks what people are saying about him. The disciples reply based on what they hear among the people. Then Peter answers based on his understanding of Jesus. "You are the Messiah."

- What does Peter mean by "Messiah"?
- Based on the disciples' lives with Jesus, what have they learned about Jesus' mission?

What Kind of Messiah? (vv. 30–33)

The Jewish and early Christian communities both dreamed of a liberator Messiah. Jesus does not describe himself as a political liberator. Rather, he first demands the disciples' silence about his identity. Then he tells them about his future suffering, rejection, death, and resurrection. Peter is upset by Jesus' dire prediction (overlooking the resurrection part of the message) and rebukes him. Jesus in turn rebukes Peter, saying, "Get behind me, Satan!" indicating that Peter is thinking about human things rather than divine things.

- Describe what human things Peter is focusing on.
- What divine things could Peter focus on?

How Does One Live a Faithful Disciple Life? (vv. 34–38)

Jesus now turns to the crowd, bringing them into the changing conversation. If you want to be my disciple, deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me. Jesus gives a set of paradoxical directions for the discipleship. To save your life, lose it. More specifically, those who lose their life for Jesus' sake and for the gospel will save it.

- What does "take up your cross and follow me" mean to you?

3 RESPOND

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

Who Do You Say I Am?

The disciples lived and walked with Jesus. They answer the question "Who do they say I am?" from their personal experiences. To become faithful disciples, we need personal experiences with Jesus.

- How do we learn about Jesus?
- What sources or witnesses do you use to see, hear, and know about Jesus' mission and message?

What Kind of Messiah?

Peter is rebuked for focusing on human things rather than divine things.

- On what divine things does Jesus want us to focus?
- How can you change your daily priorities from personal issues to include divine priorities? Or, what "stuff" in your personal life is getting in the way of making space for knowing Jesus' mission and messages?

How Does One Live a Faithful Disciple Life?

It is not difficult to imagine that the crowd would be confused when they heard Jesus' expectations. Jesus says what he expects, but not how to do it. We can understand the words, but what do they mean for our daily life?

Community of Christ has Enduring Principles to guide our faithful disciple life. For more specific information refer to *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition or www.cofchrist.org/enduring-principles. Each principle gives specific "what" and "how" information.

For example, The Foundation: God, Christ, Holy Spirit says:

What: God's revelation in Jesus Christ and continuing presence through the Holy Spirit, as proclaimed by scripture, is the foundation of our faith, identity, mission, message, and beliefs.

How: We do our best to uphold these principles (values, concepts, themes) as a faithful response to our heritage and our continuing experience with God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

The First Presidency provides further clarity on how to live a faithful disciple life in the “Commentary on Principles” found at www.cofchrist.org/common/cms/resources/Official-Commentary-on-Principles.pdf. The commentary outlines the moral behavior and relationship principles from Doctrine and Covenants 164:6a–b. These principles are:

- The worth and giftedness of all people
- Protect the most vulnerable
- Christ-like love
- Mutual respect
- Justice
- Covenant
- Faithfulness

Share copies of the “Commentary on Principles” with class members. Ask members to work together on the different principle topics for a brief review and discussion. Assign

one person from each group to report to the larger group one “how to live a faithful disciple life” guideline from the assigned principle.

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

What one or two divine priority (priorities) will you commit to this week? Write at least one commitment.

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

Close by singing “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” CCS 499.

Offer the following closing statement:

Go forth committed to learn more of Jesus’ ministry and mission.

Take up your cross, faithfully, by living the Enduring Principles for and in name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

LESSON 42 RESPONSE SHEET

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 19)

16 September 2018

Share a brief one- or two-sentence response to the following question: What do you mean when you say, "I am a follower of Jesus Christ"?

Mark 8:27–38

²⁷Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." ²⁹He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." ³⁰And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

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."

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Who Do People Say I Am? (vv. 27–29)

- What does Peter mean by "Messiah"?

- Based on the disciples' lives with Jesus, what have they learned about Jesus' mission?

What Kind of Messiah? (vv. 30–33)

- Describe the human things on which Peter is focusing. On what divine things could Peter focus?

Doctrine and Covenants 164:6a–b

6 a. As revealed in Christ, God, the Creator of all, ultimately is concerned about behaviors and relationships that uphold the worth and giftedness of all people and that protect the most vulnerable. Such relationships are to be rooted in the principles of Christ-like love, mutual respect, responsibility, justice, covenant, and faithfulness, against which there is no law.

b. If the church more fully will understand and consistently apply these principles, questions arising about responsible human sexuality; gender identities, roles, and relationships; marriage; and other issues may be resolved according to God's divine purposes. Be assured, nothing within these principles condones selfish, irresponsible, promiscuous, degrading, or abusive relationships.

How Does One Live a Faithful Disciple Life? (vv. 34–38)

Sharing in Community of Christ, 3rd Edition www.cofchrist.org/enduring-principles

- Grace and Generosity
- Sacredness of Creation
- Continuing Revelation
- Worth of All Persons
- All Are Called
- Responsible Choices
- Pursuit of Peace (Shalom)
- Unity in Diversity
- Blessings of Community

"Commentary on Principles" www.cofchrist.org/common/cms/resources/Official-Commentary-on-Principles.pdf

- Identify one "how to live a faithful disciple life" guideline from your assigned moral behavior and relationships principle. Write a faithful disciple "how to" guideline.

What one or two divine priority (priorities) will you commit to this week? Write at least one commitment.

This week I commit to...

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 20)

LESSON 43
23 September 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 9:30–37

Lesson Focus: Jesus teaches the disciples that the greatest among us are servants of all.

Objectives

The learners will...

- reflect on a time of blessing by a servant leader.
- learn about Jesus' betrayal.
- discuss the contrast between human crucifixion and divine resurrection.

- explore Jesus' imagery of servant of all.
- see children as Jesus sees them.

Supplies

- Copies of Response Sheet (optional)
- Pens or pencils
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to instructor: 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)

Ask class members to think of a time when they were blessed by a servant leader or minister. How did it feel? Ask each person to share, briefly, the experience with a person sitting nearby.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

There are two topics in today's scripture passage. The first is a second prediction by Jesus of his future crucifixion and resurrection (see v. 31). The second is a teaching about servant ministry by Jesus in response to the disciples' argument about who was greatest.

Second Teaching about the Future

Jesus teaches the disciples about his future a second time. This time he adds that he will be betrayed into human hands (vv. 30–31). This brings to mind Judas' betrayal (14:18). Betrayal translates from Greek into "hand over" or "hand on" like handing Jesus over to Pilate (15:1, 10) and Pilate handing Jesus on to be crucified (v. 15). Jesus' lesson explains that human hands will kill him, but God's divine action will raise him from death. Jesus tells the disciples how God's verdict, the resurrection, overcomes the human crucifixion; and the disciples, again, find the story unbelievable.

Divide the class into small groups if size allows. Discuss the following:

- How does Jesus' betrayal add to his experience of suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection?
- When have you experienced betrayal? How did you recover from the experience?
- Human crucifixion and divine resurrection are major contradictions. Describe the disciples' thoughts and

feelings about these two differing concepts.

- What do you think or feel about Jesus' radical message of God overcoming death?

Learning about Servant Ministry

In the second part of today's scripture passage, Jesus uses the disciples' argument about who is greatest to teach about servant ministry (vv. 33–37). When Jesus asked what they were talking about, the disciples were silent.

Ask class members to consider the following questions silently. Read and pause briefly after each one.

- If Jesus confronted you and asked what you are talking and fretting about, how would you respond?
- Are you worried about your work, money, or home?
- Is your status a part of your concerns? Do you want a promotion or a raise?
- What about your children? Do you want their giftedness recognized in special ways?
- Is it important to wear the right clothes or drive the best vehicle?
- What other issues are most important to you?

Close with: What we think and worry about becomes our focus and takes control of our time and our lives. Jesus asks us to direct our attention from ourselves to others.

He tells the twelve the first (or greatest) are last and servants of all. In Jesus' time the term in Greek used for servant is *diakonos*. This is the term for the one who serves meals and eats only what is left after everyone else has their fill. This servant is the lowest in rank and thus servant of all. Later in the Christian church, *diakonos* is used for a person in ministry, like a deacon or deaconess.

Continuing his teaching about servant ministry, Jesus brings a child into his arms (vv. 36–37). Children had no status in the family or society. So, bringing the child into the room with the disciples catches their attention. Then Jesus says, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me." With this pronouncement, Jesus introduces essential concepts of humility and relationships.

3 RESPOND

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

Learning about Servant Ministry

What is the role of the child in Jesus' teaching? The child represents all of the unworthy and needy. Jesus' words imply the need to welcome, nurture, and care for the relationship of child and disciple. When one welcomes a child in Jesus' name, one welcomes Jesus. When one welcomes Jesus, one welcomes parent and child, God and Jesus. The relationship between God and Jesus is healthy and righteous. Jesus is a faithful servant to God, child, and disciples. Jesus is asking the disciples to model servant relationships with him and others, especially those considered least worthy.

- How might the disciples respond to Jesus' request to welcome the child? To welcome Jesus?
- Describe what a servant relationship looks like.

Community of Christ scripture teaches us about sacred ministry and relationships. Doctrine and Covenants 163 offers these words of counsel:

2b. Generously share the invitation, ministries, and sacraments through which people can encounter the Living Christ who heals and reconciles through redemptive relationships in sacred community. The restoring of persons to healthy or righteous relationships with God, others, themselves, and the earth is at the heart of the purpose of your journey as a people of faith.

6a. Priesthood is a sacred covenant involving the highest form of stewardship of body, mind, spirit, and relationships. The priesthood shall be composed of people of humility and integrity who are willing to extend themselves in service for others and for the well-being of the faith community.

6b. ...[with] a growing capacity to bring blessing to others.

9. Faithful disciples respond to an increasing awareness of the abundant generosity of God by sharing according to the desires of their hearts;

not by commandment or constraint. Break free of the shackles of conventional culture that mainly promote self-serving interests...

10 a. Collectively and individually, you are loved with an everlasting love that delights in each faithful step taken. God yearns to draw you close so that wounds may be healed, emptiness filled, and hope strengthened.

11 b. There are many issues that could easily consume the time and energy of the church. However, the challenge before a prophetic people is to discern and pursue what matters most for the journey ahead.

Divide the class into small groups to discuss the following. Have each group report one response.

- Jesus teaches the disciples that servant ministry is developed through sacred relationships. Using the guidance from Doctrine and Covenants 163, how can we concretely develop sacred relationships?

4 SEND

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

- Ask the class to name some present-day servants (for example cashiers, gas station attendants, cleaning people, teacher's aides, nursing assistants).
- Consider your activities for this coming week. What present-day "servants" might you encounter?

- How can you bring servant ministry to present-day servants or ones seen as less worthy this week?
- Make at least one, preferably two, commitments for servant ministry this coming week.

5 BLESS

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

Close with "Make Me a Servant" CCS 597 or read the following prayer of blessing for servant ministry.

Go forth...

Blessed by a God of Love

who opens your heart to see others' needs,

Blessed by a Savior of Peace

who is your model for humble servant ministry,

Blessed by a Holy Spirit

who abundantly flows through your daily life.

Go now, beloved, serve audaciously,

those in greatest need in the name of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

LESSON 43 RESPONSE SHEET

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 20)

23 September 2018

Think of a time you were blessed by a servant leader or minister. How did it feel? Share your experience.

Mark 9:30–37

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.

³³Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" ³⁴But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. ³⁵He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." ³⁶Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

Second Teaching about the Future

- How does Jesus' betrayal add to his experience of suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection?
- When have you experienced betrayal? How did you recover from the experience?
- Human crucifixion and divine resurrection are major contradictions. Describe the disciples' thoughts and feelings about these two differing concepts.

- What do you think or feel about Jesus' radical message of God overcoming death?

Learning about Servant Ministry

Consider the following questions silently. Read and pause briefly after each line.

- If Jesus confronted you and asked what you are talking and fretting about, how would you respond?
- Are you worried about your work, money, or home?
- Is your status a part of your concerns? Do you want a promotion or a raise?
- What about your children? Do you want their giftedness recognized in special ways?
- Is it important to wear the right clothes or drive the best vehicle?
- What other issues are most important to you?

How might the disciples respond to Jesus' request to welcome the child? To welcome Jesus?

Describe what a servant relationship looks like.

Community of Christ scripture teaches us about sacred relationships. Doctrine and Covenants 163 offers these words of counsel:

2b. Generously share the invitation, ministries, and sacraments through which people can encounter the Living Christ who heals and reconciles through redemptive relationships in sacred community. The restoring of persons to healthy or righteous relationships with God, others, themselves, and the earth is at the heart of the purpose of your journey as a people of faith.

6a. Priesthood is a sacred covenant involving the highest form of stewardship of body, mind, spirit, and relationships. The priesthood shall

be composed of people of humility and integrity who are willing to extend themselves in service for others and for the well-being of the faith community.

6b. ...[with] a growing capacity to bring blessing to others.

9. Faithful disciples respond to an increasing awareness of the abundant generosity of God by sharing according to the desires of their hearts; not by commandment or constraint. Break free of the shackles of conventional culture that mainly promote self-serving interests...

10 a. Collectively and individually, you are loved with an everlasting love that delights in each faithful step taken. God yearns to draw you close so that wounds may be healed, emptiness filled, and hope strengthened.

11 b. There are many issues that could easily consume the time and energy of the church. However, the challenge before a prophetic people is to discern and pursue what matters most for the journey ahead.

- Jesus teaches the disciples that servant ministry is developed through sacred relationships. Using the about guidance from Doctrine and Covenants 163, how can we concretely develop sacred relationships?

- Consider your activities for this coming week. What present-day “servants” might you encounter?

- How can you bring servant ministry to present-day servants or ones seen as less worthy this week? List some specific steps you will take this week to bring servant ministry.

Make at least one, preferably two, commitment(s) for servant ministry this coming week.

- I commit to bring servant ministry to...

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 21)

LESSON 44
30 September 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 9:38–50

Lesson Focus: Jesus calls for restoring peaceful relationships in the faith community.

Objectives

The learners will...

- reflect on peaceful relationships.
- explore various metaphors used in the text.
- discuss God's covenant of peace in Jesus Christ found in Doctrine and Covenants 164:9.
- decide one's personal covenant.

Supplies

- Copies of Response Sheet (optional)
- Pens or pencils
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to instructor: 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)

Today's worship theme is "Be Peace to One Another." Spend a few minutes thinking about a time when someone brought peace into your or another's life. Respond to one of the following in small sharing groups, as a large group, or on response sheets.

- Who in your life most models building peaceful relationships? What characteristics are most memorable?
- When has someone brought peace into your life? How did that affect you?

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Read each section of the scripture and the following commentary. Then discuss the questions either in small groups of two to four or as a whole group.

Mark 38–41

The text prior to this section (vv.33–37) has the disciples arguing about prestige and who is greatest. Jesus turns their focus to servant ministry and caring for the most vulnerable. Now the disciples are worried about a person who is casting out demons in Jesus' name. How can someone who is not a part of their group perform acts

without Jesus' direct authority? Their question again conveys the disciples' need for personal prestige and status. Aren't they more authorized? This perspective overlooks the benefit gained by the ones healed. Jesus responds by expanding the disciples' narrow perspective. Do not draw boundaries and limit who can use my name. Jesus says all who use my name for good are welcome and worthy.

- When have you seen people in the church disagree or argue about who has authority?
- How could the circumstance be handled to welcome all and create healthy, peaceful relationships?

Mark 42–48

The early hearers of the Gospel of Mark would understand the text as metaphors. The "little ones" Jesus refers to are new people to the faith. Jesus cautions mature members and the disciples against causing new members to stumble. The metaphors of millstone, severing limbs, and tearing out eyes likely refer to various roles or possibly behaviors of members in the community of believers. If members' actions are harmful to the integrity of the whole, it is better they are removed. If the offending behaviors are replaced with helpful interactions, the peace of the whole faith community is maintained or restored.

The hell and fire metaphor likely refers to a valley outside the southwest wall of Jerusalem known as "hell" or "Gehenna." For hundreds of years it was a site for pagan rituals including child sacrifices. Jewish writers referred to it as a valley of slaughter (Jeremiah 7:32), punishment, and death. During the Gospel writers' time it had a horrible reputation as a dump with continuous smoke and fires, trash and maggots.

What is the essential message through all the graphic imagery? The wholeness, integrity, and peace of the faith community is most important.

- What are some ways we put stumbling blocks in the way of new and existing members?
- What behaviors, even routine activities, could cause visitors or new members distress?
- How can we be peace builders with one another?

Mark 49–50

The closing section is about salt. Salt is a mineral necessary to sustain life. It is used for seasoning, as a preservative, a disinfectant, for ceremonial offerings, and as a unit of exchange. The Israelites included salt in religious offerings. Salt was also used to seal covenants with God and one another (Leviticus 2:13). This text affirms each person having salt within as a resource. "Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another." The

gathered community of faith is salt for the mission of Jesus Christ.

- How can your congregation share its "saltiness" (hospitality, relationship-building, friendships) to bring peace to one another? To your community?

3 RESPOND

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

God's Covenant of Peace in Jesus Christ—Doctrine and Covenants 164:9

Read the scripture. Then discuss the questions either in small groups of two to four or as a whole group.

9a. Beloved children of the Restoration, your continuing faith adventure with God has been divinely led, eventful, challenging, and sometimes surprising to you. By the grace of God, you are poised to fulfill God's ultimate vision for the church.

b. When your willingness to live in sacred community as Christ's new creation exceeds your natural fear of spiritual and relational transformation, you will become who you are called to be. The rise of Zion the beautiful, the peaceful reign of Christ, awaits your whole-hearted response to the call to make and steadfastly hold to God's covenant of peace in Jesus Christ.

c. This covenant entails sacramental living that respects and reveals God's presence and reconciling activity in creation. It requires whole-life stewardship dedicated to expanding the church's restoring ministries, especially those devoted to asserting the worth of persons, protecting the sacredness of creation, and relieving physical and spiritual suffering.

d. If you truly would be Community of Christ, then embody and live the concerns and passion of Christ.

e. The challenges and opportunities are momentous. Will you remain hesitant in the shadows of your fears, insecurities, and competing loyalties? Or will you move forward in the light of your divinely instilled call and vision?

f. The mission of Jesus Christ is what matters most for the journey ahead.

God challenges Community of Christ—us—to fulfill God's ultimate vision to live in sacred community as Zion.

- What barriers prevent us from fulfilling the covenant?
- How are you engaged in restoring ministries?

4 SEND

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

God’s covenant of peace in Jesus Christ requires whole-life stewardship dedicated to expanding the church’s restoring ministries.

- What will you covenant to do to move the mission of Jesus Christ forward?
- Complete the following: I covenant to
 _____ in my personal spiritual life.
 _____ in my family.
 _____ in my congregation.
 _____ in my community.

5 BLESS

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

In closing share together by singing or reading “Send Me Forth” CCS 651. Or have one or two people read the stanzas of the song.

LESSON 44 RESPONSE SHEET

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 21)

30 September 2018

Today's worship theme is "Be Peace to One Another." Spend a few minutes thinking about a time when someone brought peace into your or another's life. Respond to one of the following in small sharing groups, as a large group, or on response sheets.

- Who in your life most models building peaceful relationships? What characteristics are most memorable?
- When has someone brought peace into your life? How did that affect you?

Mark 9:38–50

³⁸John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." ³⁹But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterwards to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰Whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward. ⁴²If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea.

⁴³⁻⁴⁴If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. ⁴⁵⁻⁴⁶And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸where the worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. ⁴⁹for everyone will be salted with fire. ⁵⁰Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

- When have you seen people in the church disagree or argue about who has authority?

- How could the circumstance be handled to welcome all and create healthy peaceful relationships?

- What are some ways we put stumbling blocks in the way of new and existing members?

- What behaviors, even routine activities, could cause visitors or new members distress?

- How can we be peace builders with one another?

- How can your congregation share its "saltiness" (hospitality, relationship-building, friendships) to bring peace to one another? To your community?

God challenges Community of Christ—us—to fulfill God's ultimate vision to live in sacred community as Zion.

- What barriers prevent us from fulfilling the covenant?

- How are you engaged in restoring ministries?

God's covenant of peace in Jesus Christ requires whole-life stewardship dedicated to expanding the church's restoring ministries.

- What will you covenant to do to move the mission of Jesus Christ forward?

- Complete the following: I covenant to
_____ in my personal spiritual life.
_____ in my family.
_____ in my congregation.
_____ in my community.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 22)

LESSON 45
7 October 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 10:2–16

Lesson Focus: Jesus teaches about the importance of mutual relationships built on joy, hope, love, peace, and justice.

Objectives

The learners will...

- reflect on the contrast of Pharisaic understanding of marriage and divorce with Jesus' teachings.
- discuss Jesus' description of marriage in the Kingdom of God.
- describe the importance of children in Jesus' narrative.

- review Community of Christ sacraments of marriage, blessing of children, and the Lord's Supper (Communion).

Supplies

- Copies of Response Sheet (optional)
- Pens or pencils
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)

Note to instructor: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Mark 10:2–16 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 114–115, 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)

Think of a particularly meaningful experience you have had with one of the following sacraments: The Lord's Supper (Communion), blessing of children, or marriage. Briefly share your response to the experience with a person close to you.

- What one aspect of the sacrament was particularly meaningful during the experience?
- Why or how is the sacrament important to your spiritual life?

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Read each section of the scripture and the following commentary. Then discuss the questions in small groups of two to four or as a whole group.

Mark 10:2–12—**Marriage and Divorce**

Jesus is teaching, and some Pharisees seek to trap him with a controversial question. "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" (v. 2) Divorce is apparently a controversial issue for the faith community based on the Pharisees' question. Whatever Jesus answers, some group is likely

to be offended. Jesus flips the question to a teaching moment about relationships. He emphasizes the equality of a woman and man in a marriage covenant. He refers to Hebrew Scripture to emphasize God's equality in creation. "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God...male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). "Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them 'Humankind' when they were created" (Genesis 5:2).

He tells of a man leaving his father and mother to join with his wife so the two shall become one flesh (Genesis 2:24). He declares that in God's kingdom the expectation is wholeness for "what God has joined together, let no one separate" (v. 9).

- What is your reaction to Jesus flipping the discussion from the controversy of divorce to God's expectations for covenant marriage relationships?
- Describe what covenant relationship means to you.
- How can we as Community of Christ model covenant relationships as we share the peace of Jesus Christ?

Mark 10:13–16—**Blessing of Children**

Jesus' teaching about relationships models a new era. He goes beyond what is permissible (Pharisees' rules) to what is possible in God's unfolding kingdom of joy, hope, love, peace, and justice. Jesus raises the "discussion of rules" issue to a higher expectation of receiving the kingdom of God as a little child. Children had less value than slaves and were rarely seen in public. They had no social standing or worth. By allowing the children in his presence, Jesus signaled that children are loved, valued, and worthy of God's grace.

Human behavior often leads us away from the expected ideals of God's kingdom. Jesus uses the innocence of children to show how being open to God's grace and mercy allows one to enter into God's kingdom. This is particularly evident as Jesus tells the disciples to "[l]et the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs" (v. 14).

Children require care and guidance. Young ones are completely dependent on their caregivers. Jesus uses this as a teaching point. One enters the kingdom of God through dependence on God's love and grace. Salvation is not based on following current legal understandings. Instead, learning to depend on God as a child depends on parents and caregivers. Then one can enter as innocent as a child.

- What captures your attention about Jesus' welcoming the little children?
- How do we (or don't we) welcome little children into our midst?

- Are there specific actions to take to be more welcoming to children? To others?

3 RESPOND

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

Marriage—www.CofChrist.org/sacraments

Jesus Christ taught that the bond between two people who love and commit to each other in a formalized covenant is sacred (Matthew 19:4–6). He blessed marriage with his presence (John 2:1–11). Christian marriage is a sacred covenant between two people for lifelong, healthy, loving companionship. Marriage is also a legal agreement. The sacrament of marriage highlights God's desire to strengthen and enrich the marriage.

A Community of Christ marriage ceremony includes a statement of mutual covenant, "You both mutually agree to be each other's companion..." (Doctrine and Covenants 111:2b) and a pronouncement prayer, "May God add his blessings and keep you to fulfill your covenants from henceforth and forever. Amen" (Doctrine and Covenants 111:2d). The couple's agreement establishes a lifelong bond, a covenant to share Christ-like love with each other, with others, and with God.

Community of Christ priests and elders may perform this sacrament, regardless of the couple's membership in Community of Christ, as long as local laws governing marriage are followed.

The Christian marriage covenant is modeled on the self-giving love between Christ and the church. It is a mutual agreement between a couple who commits to lifelong companionship. The spiritual blessing of the church ceremony along with the support of family, friends, and church members helps solidify the couple's commitments.

- Silently consider what aspects of the Community of Christ marriage vows are special for you. Share your response in small groups or as a whole group.
- What Enduring Principles are reflected in the sacrament of marriage?
- How can we share these Enduring Principles with others in mission for Jesus Christ?

Blessing of Children—Luke 18:15–17

¹⁵People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. ¹⁶But Jesus called for them and said, "Let the little children

come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. ¹⁷Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.”

The sacrament of blessing of children is based on Jesus’ blessing of children. Ideally it is the focus of a planned worship service where the focus is on the meaning and importance of the sacrament. The prayer of blessing is offered by a Melchisedec priesthood member. There are no required elements in the prayer. However, it is appropriate to include a statement of blessing and thanksgiving for the life of the child. It is also important to recognize the importance of nurturing parents and caregivers as well as the congregation to teach and care for the child and to encourage and support the parents. It is helpful to provide time in the service for the family and congregation members to covenant together to care for the child in the years to come. The sacrament of blessing of children is a wonderful outreach ministry. This blessing is open to all, members and friends.

- If you have shared in the sacrament of blessing of children, think about the experience. Consider especially the spiritual aspects of the service.
- Share briefly one particularly meaningful aspect of the sacrament with another person or in a small group.
- How might the congregation share the sacrament of blessing of children as a missional outreach?

4 SEND

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

The Lord’s Supper (Communion)—Doctrine and Covenants 164

4a. Serve the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper to all committed followers of Christ as a visible witness of loving Christian fellowship and shared remembrance of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection. Individuals may choose whether or not to receive the emblems according to their faith and understanding in harmony with guidelines provided by the First Presidency.

4b. This pastoral provision does not lessen additional meanings associated with this sacrament in the church’s life. When the church gathers for Communion, highlight the opportunity for members to reaffirm their baptismal covenant, to reconcile strained relationships, and to commit together to the church’s mission of promoting communities of generosity, justice, and peacefulness.

4c. Explore all the ways the Lord’s Supper can spiritually form the church community into a true and living expression of the life, sacrifice, resurrection, and continuing presence of Christ. Inherent in this sacrament is the divine call for the church to be a sacramental offering for the blessing, healing, and peace of creation.

Today is the first Sunday of the month when we traditionally participate in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper (Communion). Doctrine and Covenants 164:4 provides specific guidance for offering the sacrament. The preceding verses of Section 164 remind us to examine the depth of our baptismal commitment (164:3a). Live your baptism daily, growing in skills and qualities of discipleship. Generously support the ministries of the church that restore Christ’s covenant of peace, even our hoped-for Zion (164:3b, paraphrased).

Communion is the time to remember one’s baptismal commitment. It is also a time to re-confirm one’s commitment to serve the Living Christ.

- Think about your baptism. What was the setting? Who was there? How old were you? What were the circumstances leading up to your baptism commitment? Were you ready? How did you plan to serve the Living Christ?
- Share in a small group of two or three: What will you recommit to do to serve the Living Christ today?

5 BLESS

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

In closing sing or read “Strong, Gentle Children” CCS 233. Or have one or more persons read the stanzas of the song.

LESSON 45 RESPONSE SHEET

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 22)

7 October 2018

Think of a particularly meaningful experience you have had with one of the following sacraments: The Lord's Supper (Communion), blessing of children, or marriage.

- What aspect of the sacrament was particularly meaningful during the experience?

- Why or how is the sacrament important to your spiritual life?

Mark 10:2–16

²Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"
³He answered them, "What did Moses command you?"
⁴They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her."
⁵But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you.
⁶But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female.
⁷For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,
⁸and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh.
⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

¹⁰Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter.
¹¹He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her;
¹²and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

¹³People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them.
¹⁴But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs."

¹⁵Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it."

¹⁶And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Mark 10:2–12—**Marriage and Divorce**

- What is your reaction to Jesus flipping the discussion from the controversy of divorce to the God's expectations for covenant marriage relationships?

- Describe what covenant relationship means to you.

Mark 10:13–16—**Blessing of Children**

- How can we as Community of Christ model covenant relationships as we share the peace of Jesus Christ?

- What captures your attention about Jesus' welcoming the little children?

- How do we (or don't we) welcome little children into our midst?

- Are there specific actions to take to be more welcoming to children? To others?

Marriage—www.CofChrist.org/sacraments

Jesus Christ taught that the bond between two people who love and commit to each other in a formalized covenant is sacred (Matthew 19:4–6). He blessed marriage with his presence (John 2:1–11). Christian marriage is a sacred covenant between two people for lifelong, healthy, loving companionship. Marriage is also a legal agreement. The sacrament of marriage highlights God’s desire to strengthen and enrich the marriage.

A Community of Christ marriage ceremony includes a statement of mutual covenant, “You both mutually agree to be each other’s companion...” (Doctrine and Covenants 111:2b) and a pronouncement prayer, “May God add his blessings and keep you to fulfill your covenants from henceforth and forever. Amen” (Doctrine and Covenants 111:2d). The couple’s agreement establishes a lifelong bond, a covenant to share Christ-like love with each other, with others, and with God.

Community of Christ priests and elders may perform this sacrament, regardless of the couple’s membership in Community of Christ, as long as local laws governing marriage are followed.

- Silently consider what aspects of the Community of Christ marriage vows are special for you. Share your response in small groups or as a whole group.
- What Enduring Principles are reflected in the sacrament of marriage?
- How can we share these Enduring Principles with others in mission for Jesus Christ?

Blessing of Children—Luke 18:15–17

¹⁵People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. ¹⁶But Jesus called for them and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. ¹⁷Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.”

- If you have shared in the sacrament of blessing of children, think about the experience. Consider especially the spiritual aspects of the experience.
- Share briefly one particularly meaningful experience during the sacrament with another person or in a small group.
- How might the congregation share the sacrament of blessing of children as a missional outreach?

Communion—Doctrine and Covenants 164

4 a. Serve the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper to all committed followers of Christ as a visible witness of loving Christian fellowship and shared remembrance of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection. Individuals may choose whether or not to receive the emblems according to their faith and understanding in harmony with guidelines provided by the First Presidency.

4b. This pastoral provision does not lessen additional meanings associated with this sacrament in the church’s life. When the church gathers for Communion, highlight the opportunity for members to reaffirm their baptismal covenant, to reconcile strained relationships, and to commit together to the church’s mission of promoting communities of generosity, justice, and peacefulness.

4c. Explore all the ways the Lord’s Supper can spiritually form the church community into a true and living expression of the life, sacrifice, resurrection, and continuing presence of Christ. Inherent in this sacrament is the divine call for the church to be a sacramental offering for the blessing, healing, and peace of creation.

Communion is the time to remember one's baptismal commitment. It is also a time to re-confirm one's commitment to serve the Living Christ.

- Think about your baptism. What was the setting? Who was there? How old were you? What were the circumstances leading up to your baptism commitment? Were you ready? How did you plan to serve the Living Christ?
- Complete the following: What will you recommit to do to serve the Living Christ today?

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 23)

LESSON 46
14 October 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 10:17–31

Lesson Focus: Jesus says to inherit eternal life, go, sell, give, come, and follow me.

Objectives

The learners will...

- reflect on the question “What must I do?”
- discuss the wealthy man’s response to the demand to give away all his possessions.
- explore personal responses to Jesus’ call to “follow me” in Mark and Doctrine and Covenants 163.

- commit to know, be, and do mission.

Supplies

- Copies of Response Sheet (optional)
- Pens or pencils

Note to instructor: 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)

Read the following scripture and prayerfully consider the following question.

Doctrine and Covenants 163:1

“Community of Christ,” your name, given as a divine blessing, is your identity and calling. If you will discern and embrace its full meaning, you will not only discover your future, you will become a blessing to the whole creation. Do not be afraid to go where it beckons you to go.

- What divine blessings and meanings come from our name, Community of Christ?

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Read each section of the scripture and the following commentary. Then discuss the questions either in small groups of two to four or as a whole group.

Mark 10:17–22—**The Wealthy Man**

The scripture prior to this one declares, “Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it” (v. 15). Now a rich man approaches Jesus respectfully asking, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” The Gospel of Matthew calls him “young” (Matthew 19:20) and in Luke he is a “ruler” (Luke 18:18). Christian tradition refers to him as a “rich, young ruler.” For the Gospel of Mark, he is a faithful man with many possessions.

We know the man is blessed and faithful. In the ancient world of the Greeks, Romans, and Hebrews material wealth is seen as reward for good living. Jesus is assured of his faithfulness when the man says he keeps the Jewish laws. Jesus refers to several of the Ten Commandments (5–9 in Exodus 20:12–16; Deuteronomy 5:16–20) and to honesty and avoidance of fraud (Deuteronomy 24:14). Jesus then looks, loves him, and responds with a “to do” list. He asks the wealthy man to do five things: go, sell, give, come, and follow. The man is shocked and leaves grieving, for he has many possessions.

- Describe the issues with wealth suggested by the text.
- What if the man left sorrowful because he planned to sell everything and leave all to follow Jesus?
- How would it feel to make this major transition in life? What must one think through to make this happen?

Mark 10:23–27—**Camel Metaphor**

“How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” Jesus uses the metaphor of the camel going through the eye of a needle to express how difficult it is to give away possessions and change lifestyle. Surrendering all and following Jesus requires hard decisions. The disciples are baffled because by societal norms the man is already divinely blessed and should qualify to enter God’s kingdom. Peter asks, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus assures them that what is humanly impossible is divinely possible. The answer to “What must I do?” is to willingly receive God’s grace freely given. Then leave human securities behind and follow Jesus.

- Put yourself in the scenario of the wealthy man, or consider your personal circumstances. What does following Jesus require from a practical sense?
- How easy is it to consider giving up everything?
- What motivates you to follow Jesus? Why do you choose to follow Jesus?

Mark 10:28–31—**Followers’ Rewards**

Jesus makes a promise to the man, “You will have treasure in heaven.” The disciples know about giving up possessions and security. They sacrifice all to follow Jesus, leaving work, families, and homes (Mark 1:16–20). Jesus promises a new family and home unfortunately with persecutions. The good news is the future brings eternal life. Finally, Jesus reminds his followers of the call to servant ministry. “Many who are first will be last, and the last will be first” (v. 31). Fully engaging in mission involves serving those who are most needy.

- How are the disciples’ struggles and your struggles alike?
- What helps you stay focused on Christ’s mission as your mission?

3 RESPOND

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

Wealth and Possessions

The accumulation of wealth and possessions is not the problem. Rather, Jesus lovingly confronts the primary issue, which is the attitude toward and dependence on possessions. Jesus invites all to step from the captivity of things to freedom through servant ministry.

- How does one’s attitude toward wealth and possessions affect your ability to engage in mission?
- What life-controlling behaviors do you need to overcome to make room for mission-focused caring and sharing behaviors?

Know, Be, Do

Community of Christ disciple and priesthood ministry courses teach a holistic approach to mission. Ministry involves knowing, being, and doing. We need knowledge, spiritual devotion or “being” time with the divine, as well as mission activity. The rich man asked, “What must I do?” Our call is broader requiring study, spiritual focus, and active engagement in Christ’s mission. Yet, we are assured of God’s blessing. “Your name, given as a divine blessing, is your identity and calling. If you will discern and embrace its full meaning, you will not only discover your future, you will become a blessing to the whole creation” (Doctrine and Covenants 163:1).

- Where do you need to focus your “knowing” time? What additional studies are important for you?
- How is your devotional life? What additional emphasis do you need for your “being” life?
- In what mission-related activities are you engaged? What additional “doing” is needed to balance Christ’s mission in your life?

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

We are assured of God's abiding presence in the difficult times and choices of life. Read the following scripture and prayerfully consider your response.

Doctrine and Covenants 163:2a

Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God's shalom, invites all people to come and receive divine peace in the midst of the difficult questions and struggles of life. Follow Christ in the way that leads to God's peace and discover the blessings of all of the dimensions of salvation.

- Silently pray, asking God to continue to journey with you as you respond to God's invitation to follow Christ by *knowing, being, and doing* mission.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

(5% of total lesson time)

Sending Forth

Go forth, assured of God's abundant generosity and blessing as you pursue Christ's mission. Amen.

LESSON 46 RESPONSE SHEET

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 23)

14 October 2018

Read the following scripture and prayerfully consider the following question.

Doctrine and Covenants 163:1

"Community of Christ," your name, given as a divine blessing, is your identity and calling. If you will discern and embrace its full meaning, you will not only discover your future, you will become a blessing to the whole creation. Do not be afraid to go where it beckons you to go.

- What divine blessings and meanings come from our name Community of Christ?

Mark 10:17–31

¹⁷As 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?"
¹⁸Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹You 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.'" ²⁰He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth."
²¹Jesus, 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." ²²When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

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

²⁸Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." ²⁹Jesus 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, ³⁰who 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. ³¹But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

- Describe the issues with wealth suggested by the text.
- What if the man left sorrowful because he planned to sell everything and leave all to follow Jesus?
- How would it feel to make this major transition in life? What must one think through to make this happen?
- What motivates you to follow Jesus? Why do you choose to follow Jesus?
- How are the disciples' struggles and your struggles alike?

- What helps you stay focused on Christ's mission as your mission?
- How is your devotional life? What additional emphasis do you need for your "being" life?
- What life-controlling behaviors do you need to overcome to make room for mission-focused caring and sharing behaviors?

I need additional focus in my devotional life especially in...

I commit to additional "being" time by...

Read the following scripture and prayerfully consider your response.

Doctrine and Covenants 163:2a

Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God's shalom, invites all people to come and receive divine peace in the midst of the difficult questions and struggles of life. Follow Christ in the way that leads to God's peace and discover the blessings of all of the dimensions of salvation.

Silently pray, asking God to continue to journey with you as you to respond to God's invitation to follow Christ by knowing, being, and doing mission.

- Where do you need to focus your "knowing" time? What additional studies are important for you?

- What mission-related activities are you engaged in? What additional "doing" is needed to balance Christ's mission in your life?

My current mission-related activities are...

I need more focus in my "knowing" time on...

I commit to additional "doing" in mission by...

I commit to additional studies in...

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 24)

LESSON 47
21 October 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 10:34–45

Lesson Focus: Disciples of Jesus are to be servant leaders.

Objectives

The learners will...

- define what it means for disciples of Jesus to be servant leaders.
- compare Community of Christ's Basic Belief about Discipleship to the request James and John (the sons of Zebedee) asked Jesus and the typical secular ruler's behavior as told by Jesus.
- create a personal goal of doing one thing during the next week to live as a servant leader in their interactions with others.

Supplies

- Bibles
- White board and dry erase makers, chalkboard and chalk, or flip chart and markers
- Pencils or pens
- Copies of Response Sheet (optional)
- Small note cards or standard-sized paper cut in quarter segments (one for each person)
- CD player or other device to play quiet, meditative music (optional)
- Chime or small bell
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to instructor: In preparation for this lesson, review "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.

What are some of the positive and negative feelings you have about the word "servant"?

2 ENGAGE

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

To set the scene, ask for a volunteer to read aloud Mark 10:32–34. 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.

Explore Mark 10:35–45 by inviting three volunteers to read assigned sections. Person 1 reads the narrative verses not

in quotes, person 2 the words spoken by James and John, and person 3 the words spoken by Jesus. Notice how Mark weaves in a reference to baptism from the beginning of his Gospel, and a reference to “cup,” which foreshadows the Passover meal they will be sharing. It is also a hint of the suffering that the disciples would most likely face. Notice also the characteristics of secular leaders that Jesus identifies. Jesus instructs the disciples that they are to be different and tells them what that means.

Mark was an author, not simply a compiler of oral stories and written fragments of stories. He wrote a story of Jesus that highlighted what he understood to be Jesus’ important role in revealing aspects of God’s kingdom on Earth. One part of it was that it was already coming into being. Another part Jesus revealed was a reversal of what leaders in the kingdom of God would be like. Rather than using power or threats to control people, disciples were to be servant leaders.

Discuss:

- What impact does this scripture have on your feelings?
- List some of the ways contemporary leaders in business or local or national government act. Describe their leadership style.
- What do you think Jesus’ observations about our current era’s secular leaders would be?
- In light of this scripture’s focus on servant leadership, describe one way that your community might become more like God’s kingdom on Earth.

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. 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.

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

The sons of Zebedee seemed to be centered on what was in it for them as they followed Jesus. Sometimes we are like them and have a hard time shifting our focus from our own lives and what we want to living as disciples who offer our lives in service to God’s reign.

Discuss:

- What do you think “radical obedience to Jesus in every part of life” would look like?
- What changes might you need to make to live that way?
- How can you demonstrate being a servant leader the way Jesus meant?

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.

Hand out note cards or paper and pencils or pens. Tell the class they will have a brief amount of time to write one thing they will do in the coming week to be the kind of servant leader Jesus described. Play quiet instrumental music during this activity or encourage a calm, silent time for writing.

5 BLESS

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

Tell class members that they will have a few moments to pray for another class member and to be prayed for. The focus of the prayer is to support each other in acts of servanthood that each person wrote down privately. Have class members select a partner. Tell them they will each have a minute to pray for each other. Use a chime or bell to signal when it is time to conclude the first prayer and begin the second, and again to conclude the prayer time.

Sing or read together “Make Me a Servant” CCS 597.

LESSON 47 RESPONSE SHEET

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 24)

21 October 2018

Guess the phrase: _____

Mark 10:34–45

³⁴they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again."

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."

- What impact does this scripture have on your feelings?

- List some of the ways contemporary leaders in business or local or national government act. Describe their leadership style.

- What do you think Jesus' observations about our current era's secular leaders would be?

- In light of this scripture's focus on servant leadership, describe one way that your community might become more like God's kingdom on Earth.

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.

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

- What do you think "radical obedience to Jesus in every part of life" would look like?

- What changes might you need to make to live that way?

- How can you demonstrate being a servant leader the way Jesus meant?

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 25)

LESSON 48
28 October 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 10:46–52

Lesson Focus: Jesus reveals God and calls you to discipleship.

Objectives

The learners will...

- identify different types of blindness shown in this scripture text.
- compare the followers' (insider) response to Jesus to that of the outsider Bartimaeus.
- discuss the connection between the text and Community of Christ's Basic Belief on Humanity and the Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons.

- identify something in themselves that needs to be healed in order to be open to discerning Jesus' claim on their lives.

Supplies

- Bibles
- White board and dry erase markers, chalkboard and chalk, or flip chart and markers
- Copies of Response Sheet (optional)
- Pencils or pens

Note to instructor: In preparation for this lesson, review "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)

Read and briefly review the healing story in Mark 8:22–26. Encourage class members to listen for similarities and differences between this scripture and today's passage. Select a volunteer to read aloud Mark 10:46–52.

On a white board, chalkboard, or flip chart, create two columns labeled Mark 8:22–26 and Mark 10:46–52. Ask class members to suggest similarities and differences between the two healing stories. Write the ideas under the relevant scripture headings.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

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 infirm, 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.

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.

In small groups of three or four, discuss ways people are still blind to who Jesus is and what he was about. Select a spokesperson to share a summary with the group as directed. Allow a few minutes and then draw the class back to hear each group's ideas.

Discuss:

- What might be a reason Jesus' disciples and the crowd initially tried to silence Bartimaeus?

- Why do you think insiders today, those who say they are Christian, are sometimes the ones who are blind to Jesus' role in disclosing God's kingdom-building on Earth? Keep in mind that God's kingdom is sometimes called the upside-down kingdom, where those who are last will be first.

3 RESPOND

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

Community of Christ's Basic Belief about Humanity reveals an important principle. Ask for a volunteer to read it from the Response Sheet.

Discuss:

- Where in today's scripture passage do you see confirmation of this Basic Belief?
- 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?
- What might integrating this Basic Belief look like in your congregation?

Community of Christ's Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons further affirms the importance of the Basic Belief about Humanity. Ask for another volunteer to read it from the Response Sheet.

- How did Jesus demonstrate this in today's text?
- Write at least one idea on the Response Sheet that you can do *personally* to demonstrate this in your normal activities of daily living.

4 SEND

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

Jesus did not give up on his disciples, and he knew that after his death and resurrection they would finally have their eyes opened about who he was and what following him really meant. Think about yourself as someone who needs Jesus' healing ministry. In what way do you personally need to be healed in order to see more clearly opportunities to follow Jesus? In your prayer life this week ask for that specific blessing of healing. Pray for courage to respond when you sense Jesus calling you to mission.

5 BLESS

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

Lead the class in the responsive reading on the Response Sheet.

LESSON 48 RESPONSE SHEET

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 25)

28 October 2018

Mark 10:46–52

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.

Basic Belief 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

- Where in today’s scripture passage do you see confirmation of this Basic Belief?
- 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?
- What might integrating this Basic Belief look like in your congregation?

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

- How did Jesus demonstrate this in today’s text?
- Write at least one idea that you can do personally to demonstrate this in your daily activities.

Responsive Reading

Leader: Jesus, who led your disciples in spite of their blindness,

People: we praise you.

Leader: For the way you taught them and still teach us to follow you,

People: we praise you.

Leader: For your healing ministry when on the earth and now in our lives,

People: we praise you.

Leader: For the opportunities to partner with you in bringing God’s kingdom in our congregation and community,

People: we praise you.

All: We praise you for showing us how to be your followers. Help us have eyes to see where you lead.

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...

- identify the importance of the addition Jesus made to the Shema (Jewish daily prayer), that of loving God “with all your mind.”
- explore the connection between the Community of Christ Basic Belief about God and today’s scripture text.
- describe what “loving yourself” means in the context of this scripture passage.

- create a personal plan that translates the ideas in the Great Commandment to an action step.

Supplies

- Bibles
- Copies of Response Sheet
- Paper
- Pencils or pens

Note to instructor: In preparation for this lesson, review “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)

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 divide the class into three groups to read aloud Mark 12:28–34 in unison as follows:

- Group 1 will read everything that doesn’t have quotation marks.
- Group 2 will read words said by the scribe.
- Group 3 will read words Jesus spoke.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Mark used this incident in Jesus’ life to emphasize the connection between what Jesus taught and practiced and the Hebraic traditional teachings. In our current setting, this text helps distinguish between civil discussion and confrontation. Conversations among Christians of differing beliefs and between Christians and persons of

other religious traditions often end up confrontational. God first loved us! We can respond to that love by loving God and neighbor. Community of Christ Basic Belief about God reflects that understanding.

Read the Basic Belief about God on the Response Sheet.

The scribe understood the importance of what Jesus said. However, Jesus' comment to the scribe indicated that until the scribe moved beyond belief to deed, he hadn't really internalized the heart of it.

Discuss:

- Why do you think Jesus added the phrase about loving God with your *mind* to the traditional Shema (pronounced *shuh-mah*) written in Deuteronomy?
- How might the idea of loving yourself be misunderstood or wrongly applied?
- Describe how Jesus' words would have seemed radical to Mark's readers, keeping in mind the social and political conditions of that era about 40 years after Jesus' death. Those conditions included rule by a foreign power, patriarchy, and persecution.

3 RESPOND

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

Scholar Ched Myers, in his book *Binding the Strong Man*, wrote "Mark's discipleship narrative demands engagement and a response of praxis" (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994, p. 100). For Mark hearing the word was secondary to practicing it, acting on it, incorporating into your life.

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."

Discuss:

- How would you interpret Myers' statement in relation to today's text from Mark?
- How does Community of Christ's practice of open Communion fit with this text?

- Several years ago "What Would Jesus Do?" was a popular phrase that tried to encourage people to behave more like Jesus. Work with a partner to create an original short phrase that conveys a positive message of loving God and neighbor. Be prepared to share your idea with the class.

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. One way to understand that statement is to keep in mind that the kingdom of God is about agape love. When people love God and neighbor, it is a key step in transforming the world, creating the kingdom of God on Earth.

Think of at least one action that you will commit to doing this coming week to put into practice loving your neighbor as yourself.

5 BLESS

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

Close with the following song choosing one of these options.

- If class members know it, sing it together.
- If at least one person knows it and is willing, have them sing it for the class.
- Speak it as a call and response; have one person read a phrase and then have the class repeat it.

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

Love, love, love, love;

The gospel in one word is love.

Love your neighbor as your brother (sister),

Love, love, love.

LESSON 49 RESPONSE SHEET

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 26)

4 November 2018

Mark 12:28–42

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.

Basic Belief: God

We believe in one living God who meets us in the testimony of Israel, is revealed in Jesus Christ, and moves through all creation as the Holy Spirit. We affirm the Trinity—God who is a community of three persons. All things that exist owe their being to God: mystery beyond understanding and love beyond imagination. This God alone is worthy of our worship.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd edition, p. 14

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

- How might the idea of loving yourself be misunderstood or wrongly applied?
- Describe how Jesus' words would have seemed radical to Mark's readers, keeping in mind the social and political conditions of that era about 40 years after Jesus' death. Those conditions included rule by a foreign power, patriarchy, and persecution.

With a partner, create a short phrase that conveys a positive message about loving God and neighbor.

- Write at least one action that you will commit to doing this coming week to put into practice loving your neighbor as yourself.

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...

- evaluate different interpretations of the text from Mark.
- explore correlations between the Community of Christ Enduring Principle Grace and Generosity and today's scripture passage.
- identify their personal response to God's generosity.

Supplies

- Bibles
- Copies of Response Sheet
- Pencils or pens
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- White board and dry erase markers, chalkboard and chalk, or flip chart and markers

Note to instructor: In preparation for this lesson, review "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)

As people come into class arrange them so all the men are in the front. Direct the women to sit behind the men. If you usually sit in a circle or around tables, direct the men to sit side-by-side in one cluster in the most comfortable part of the room with the women across from them. This is to simulate the scribes' behavior in seating themselves in the best seats in the synagogues.

The setting for today's scripture 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 aloud Mark 12:38–44.

Think about the feelings members of the crowd might have had. Keeping in mind how you are seated here today, what might you have been feeling if you were a scribe? If you were part of the crowd?

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

There are several ways to interpret this text. We will consider three. Give each person a Response Sheet and direct them to the quotes.

- It can be seen as a critique of religious hypocrisy when the focus is on the scribes and their masquerade as faithful and pious authorities. "Scribal piety has been debunked as a thin veil for economic opportunism and exploitation" (Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994, p. 321).
- It can be seen as a critique of the temple cult where the most vulnerable, such as the poor widow, were economically exploited. "Does Jesus point to the poor widow...because she is a tragic example of how religious institutions suck the life out of people?" (Pete Peery, *Feasting on the Word, Year B, Vol. 4*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009, p. 289).

- It can be seen as a model for generosity based on faith where those with much only partially share it while those with little share all that they have. In writing about the widow's offering Emilie E. Townes has written, "Those coins represent more than money. They represent faith and belief and how these must be lived out in our lives in concrete acts and not solely by rituals that no longer hold religious power" (Emilie E. Townes, *Feasting on the Word, Year B, Vol. 4*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009, p. 286).

Discuss:

- Choose one of the suggested interpretations and tell why you agree or disagree.
- What do you think Jesus was trying to get across to the disciples?
- Today's worship theme is "Giving of Your True Capacity." What does that mean when viewed through the lens of this scripture?

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 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.

Discuss:

- Review the Enduring Principle Grace and Generosity on the Response Sheet. What speaks to your heart and mind?
- Read the words of "When the Church of Jesus" CCS 358 in unison together. How do the author's words reflect the meaning of today's scripture and echo the Enduring Principle Grace and Generosity?
- On the white board, chalkboard, or flip chart, list concrete ways to be generous with talents, time, treasure, and testimony.

4 SEND

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

On the back of the Response Sheet create a personal **SMART** goal of one act of generosity you will do this week.

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Achievable**
- **Realistic**
- **Timely**

5 BLESS

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

Invite the class 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."

LESSON 50 RESPONSE SHEET

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 27)

11 November 2018

Mark 12:38–44 NRSV

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 market-places, 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.'

Suggested interpretations:

"Scribal piety has been debunked as a thin veil for economic opportunism and exploitation."

—Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994, p. 321

"Does Jesus point to the poor widow...because she is a tragic example of how religious institutions suck the life out of people?"

—Pete Peery, *Feasting on the Word, Year B, Vol. 4*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009, p. 289

"Those coins represent more than money. They represent faith and belief and how these must be lived out in our lives in concrete acts and not solely by rituals that no longer hold religious power."

—Emilie E. Townes, *Feasting on the Word, Year B, Vol. 4*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009, p. 286

Enduring Principle 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.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 12

"When the Church of Jesus"

When the church of Jesus shuts its outer door lest the roar of traffic drown the voice of prayer:

may our prayers, Lord, make us even more aware that the world we banish is our Christian care.

If our hearts are lifted where devotion soars high above this hungry, suffering world of ours:

lest our hymns should drug us to forget its needs, forge our Christian worship into Christian deeds.

Lest the gifts we offer—money, talents, time—serve to salve our conscience to our secret shame:

Lord, reprove, inspire us by the way you give, teach us, dying Savior, how true Christians live.

—Fred Pratt Green, ©1969 Hope Publishing Company, *Community of Christ Sings* 358

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 28)

LESSON 51
18 November 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 13:1–8

Lesson Focus: God’s kingdom will come on Earth; we are partners in helping that happen.

Objectives

The learners will...

- explore what it means to see a beginning in what appears to be an end.
- discuss ways to faithfully make Responsible Choices and Pursue Peace.
- assess congregational life in relation to its role in assisting them in helping God’s kingdom on Earth become a reality.

Supplies

- Bibles
- Image of the Independence Temple (at end of lesson)
- White board and dry erase markers, chalkboard and chalk, or flip chart and markers
- Copies of Response Sheet
- Pens and pencils

Note to instructor: In preparation for this lesson, review “Exploring the Scripture” for Mark 13:1–8 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)

Display the picture or image of the Independence Temple. Ask the class to focus on it. Lead them in a time of reflection as follows.

Imagine that Jesus has led you out of the Independence Temple onto the grassy knoll across the street where you sit and look back at the building. You remember the sacrifice of generations of people who helped the dream of a temple become reality. When you point out how beautiful the spiral form is as it directs your eyes heavenward, Jesus turns to you and says that not a piece of granite or steel or glass will remain standing.

What did you feel as you listened to this imaginary scene? Talk about it with another person.

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.

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 the 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:

- What do you see in the news today that drives people to think that the end of the world is near?
- How can faithful waiting, which includes active discipleship, offer a counter word of hope?
- 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)

Jesus taught that disciples are to be the leaven that helps change the world into God's kingdom on Earth. We pray "your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

There are two Enduring Principles listed on the Response Sheet: Responsible Choices and Pursuit of Peace (Shalom). In groups of three or four, study these two Enduring Principles and then compile a list of what you

think might happen if we put them into practice. Think of real-life examples. Select someone to share your ideas with the class.

Discuss:

- What idea might be something you would be willing to do?
- Name 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)

Think about your congregational life. What are some things that are in place to assist you in being faithful to God's vision of justice, reconciliation, well-being, wholeness, and peace?

On the white board, chalkboard, or flip chart, make a list of additional ideas that might be helpful.

5 BLESS

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

Jesus tried to help his disciples see the need to remain faithful to their mission even during times of upheaval and suffering. Community of Christ's Basic Belief about End Time affirms that for us.

Read together the paragraph "End Time" from the Response Sheet as a sending forth statement.



LESSON 51 RESPONSE SHEET

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 28)

18 November 2018

Mark 13:1–8

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 rumours 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.

Enduring Principle 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.

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

Enduring Principle: 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

Basic Belief: End Time

We press forward together in service to God, knowing that our labor is not in vain. The future of the creation belongs to the Prince of Peace, not to those who oppress, dominate, or destroy. As we anticipate that future, we devote ourselves to seek Christ’s peace and pursue it. We do not know the day or hour of Christ’s coming but know only that God is faithful. With faith in God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, we face the future in hopeful longing, and with the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray: “Thy kingdom come! They will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

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

REIGN OF CHRIST— ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 29)

LESSON 52
25 November 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: : John 18:33–37

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

Objectives

The learners will...

- compare Pilate understandings of kingship with Jesus’.
- evaluate Jesus as the revelation of truth compared to what society declares as truth.
- create an action step to demonstrate their willingness to listen to Jesus’ voice and to follow.

Supplies

- Bibles
- Paper crown (optional) If there is a Burger King restaurant nearby, you can get a crown there.
- White board and dry erase markers, chalkboard and chalk, or flip chart and markers
- Copies of Response Sheet
- Pencils or pens
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to instructor: In preparation for this lesson, review “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)

All four Gospels record that Jesus was brought before Pilate, who was the prefect or governor of Judea, and questioned about being a king of the Jews. Kings were the common rulers of the day. In our day we might be asking something like, “Are you the president or the prime minister?” As you hear today’s scripture passage from John, listen for the different concepts of kingship held by Pilate and Jesus.

Select three volunteers to read the text as printed on the Response Sheet or follow these directions:

- One will be a narrator reading everything not in quotes.
- One will read Pilate’s words.
- One will read what Jesus said.

Have the readers for Pilate and Jesus stand facing each other with the narrator off to one side. Place the crown where Pilate can point to it when questioning Jesus.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Make two columns on the flip chart, chalkboard, or white board. Label one Pilate’s Concept of King; label the other Jesus’ Concept of King. Using the scripture and what the class knows about the timeframe of 30–33 CE, list ideas in the columns. Compare them.

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 text 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:

- Why was Pilate concerned about Jesus’ influence?
- Why is it difficult for us to separate allegiance from earthly rulers from allegiance to God?
- In your own words, what is the “truth” that we belong to if we listen to Jesus’ voice?

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.

Read the statements from “We Proclaim Jesus Christ” found on the Response Sheet. Compare those statements to the description of Christendom below.

Christendom is a term that refers to a blending of religion and government. It is what can happen whenever Christianity becomes accepted as the dominant religion. It has often led to horrible actions including inquisitions, crusades, and distorted laws. Jesus, in his conversation

with Pilate, emphatically stated that his kingdom was NOT of this world. The implication was that for those who listen to Jesus’ voice, allegiance is to God and not worldly kingdoms.

Discuss:

- In what ways do you see Christendom still evident today?
- How can you counteract the negative image some hold of Christianity?
- Why is authentic Christianity often viewed as counter-cultural?

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.

- Silently reflect on what you do, with whom you associate, and what you teach by your attitudes.
- On the back of the Response Sheet write one action step that you will try this week to better align your life to bring about justice and peace, God’s kingdom on Earth.

5 BLESS

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

Sing or read together “The Cause of Zion Summons Us” CCS 386.

LESSON 52 RESPONSE SHEET

REIGN OF CHRIST—ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 29)

25 November 2018

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.

“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 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...

We live and serve in hope that God’s kingdom of justice and peace will indeed come, bringing healing to the whole, groaning creation. Putting our trust in the Risen Christ, present among us by the Holy Spirit, we press on together, giving blessing, honor, and glory to God, now and forevermore.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*,
3rd Edition, pp. 22–23

“The Cause of Zion Summons Us”

The cause of Zion summons us to claim a distant dream;

The love of God in every place, the will of God supreme.

The vision calls us to our task. Forsaking self and pride,

we love and reconcile with Christ the world for which he died.

The cause of Zion celebrates the vict’ry over fear, the witness of the kingdom’s power, new life already here.

Although fulfillment seems remote, the journey just begun,

the kingdom has already come; the victory is won.

The cause of Zion prophesies the future yet to be, when men and women everywhere shall walk in dignity.

We now anticipate the day when pain and tears shall cease,

when humankind shall live as one in righteousness and peace.

—Geoffrey F. Spencer, © Community of Christ,
Community of Christ Sings 386