Part I. Introduction

Topic: JESUS’ COMMANDMENT TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS

Kind of Material: A supplementary lesson for Grade Six pupils to deepen their understanding of Jesus’ command to love our neighbors.

Audience: Grade School Students of a COED Catholic School

Situation: The Grade Six pupils exhibit some understanding of the command of Jesus to love our neighbors. But their notion of loving others seems to be limited to their family members and circle of friends. Their concern does not extend to people who are not part of their groups. The way they relate with others appears to be exclusive to the people close to them.

Problem: How to teach Jesus’ Commandment to love our neighbors to Grade Six pupils by using the story of the Call of Matthew.

Number of Session/ Length of Time: 1 session (50 minutes)

Objectives:
The lesson is designed to lead the pupils to:

Morals- follow the command of Jesus to love as shown in accepting and reaching out to others even those who are not close to them. (CFC 953)

Doctrine- believe in God revealed by Jesus as the ultimate source of loving others. (CFC 970)

Worship- pray the Lord’s Prayer as a thanksgiving to God for their loving relationship with Him and with one another.

Significance of Material

Objective Significance:
Our love for our neighbors is grounded on the command of Jesus to love and accept others because God loves and accepts them. (John 15:12)

Subjective Significance:
A proper and deeper understanding of Jesus’ commandment to love our neighbor will hopefully lead the pupils to an appreciation of the gift of others in the community. They will be helped to realize that the commandment of Jesus to love others includes everyone in the community. They will be led to acknowledge the goodness of Jesus, who loves and welcomes everyone, thus, build an intimate relationship with God through their relationship with others.

Scope and Limitation

This supplementary lesson on Jesus’ Commandment to Love our neighbors is directly intended for the Grade Six pupils. It aims to help them to love and accept others as Jesus did.

Using the account of the story of Call of Matthew (Matthew 9:9-13), reflected on in the light of CFC# 162, and 1048, as references, this supplementary lesson for the Grade Six pupils focuses on the love command of Jesus concretely shown in loving and accepting all in the community including those who are not close to them.

This supplementary lesson material is limited to one session of 50 minutes.

Methodology:

This catechetical material uses the NCDP’s source integration (Sacred Scripture, Church Teaching, and Human Experience) to communicate a more inclusive understanding of Jesus’ command to love our neighbors.

The pupils’ understanding of Jesus’ command of love will be reflected on in the light of the story of the call of Matthew as the main source of this material. The lesson proper will start with a contextualization of the pupil’s understanding of Jesus’ commandments. The gospel account will be read to challenge them to grow in their intimate relationship with God by becoming more open to others.

Outline:

A. Opening Prayer
B. Context
C. Exposition
D. Summary
E. Integration
F. Closing Prayer

Part II

A. Opening Prayer
Let us begin our class by singing “We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord”.

Loving Father, we are gathered today as one community. Please show us how to love as Your Son has loved us. Send us your Holy Spirit to help us be aware of the value and dignity of each person around us. Amen.

B. Context

You have been taught about the Commandments of Jesus to love God and to love our neighbors. Responding to this command entails living out the true meaning of love as Jesus taught through loving concern and acceptance of others. How do you relate with others especially those who do not belong to your group?

B.1 Activity: The Boat is Sinking (5 minutes)
- Choose an IT among yourselves.
- Follow what the It says.
- It says: “The boat is sinking, group yourselves into 15, 12, 5, 7.”

B.2 Let us talk about your experiences in the game.
- How did you feel when you were welcomed in the group? When you were not welcomed in the group?
- How do you choose your friends?
- Do you think you have the same attitudes with Jesus in dealing with others?

C. Exposition

Interactive Reading of the Scriptural Text:

Matthew 9:9-13 - The Call of Matthew
- Let us all join in reading the story of the call of Matthew.
- The first column will read the part of Jesus, second column – Matthew, third column – Pharisees, and the fourth column will be the narrator.

Let us look at how Christ’s encounter with Matthew reveal to us the real meaning of Jesus’ command to love our neighbors. Let us look at two main points of the story.

1. The Call: How did Jesus relate with Matthew?

“As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the custom’s post.
He said to him, “Follow me.” (Mt. 9:9)

Matthew is a tax collector. During Jesus’ time, the tax collectors were considered as sinners in the Jewish society since...
they engaged in collecting extra taxes from their fellow Jews and served the Roman Empire who enslaved them. Thus, tax collectors were excluded from the society and people avoided having fellowship with them.

In the story of Matthew, Jesus reveals the Father whose love includes everyone. Jesus calls Matthew who was sitting at the custom’s post. His call is a concrete gesture of acceptance and love. Even though Matthew is not accepted in the community, Jesus recognizes that Matthew is also a human being who deserves to be loved. Moreover, this call of Jesus is a call to follow him. Here we see Jesus concretizing his command: to love one another as he has loved us (Jn.15:12). Jesus reaches out to someone who is marginalized by his community. He says, “when you showed it to one of the least of my brothers, you showed it to me” (Mt.25:40).

Who are the people we often ignore?
In our day-to-day life, we have the tendency to relate only with those whom we like, befriend with those whom we know but are unmindful of others especially those who do not belong to the group.

We, like Matthew, are called to follow Jesus and be instruments of His love to our neighbors.

2. The Response: How did Matthew respond and how did the Pharisees react to what Jesus did?

“And Matthew got up and followed Jesus....

The Pharisees saw this and said to his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’”

(Mt.9:9-11)

Matthew got up and followed Jesus. This is how Matthew responded to the call of Jesus to be his disciple. Matthew’s “Yes” is his faith response to Jesus’ love. This response led Matthew into a loving relationship with Jesus and His disciples. This kind of relationship went beyond the group of people he used to be with like his fellow tax collectors but also with Jesus and His disciples. Thus, Matthew showed us a concrete example of a loving response to the call of Jesus. (CFC 162)

The Pharisees on the other hand, had a negative reaction to Jesus’ call. They questioned why Jesus had established friendship with the tax collectors and sinners. The Pharisees thought that being with the tax collectors and sinners would make them impure and unclean. They focused only in relating within their group, not including others whom they consider as sinners. Their reaction blinded them from establishing a loving relationship with Jesus and with others.

The most basic way of loving others is by respecting others and recognizing each other’s equality (CFC 1048). In the Scriptural text of the call of Matthew, Jesus lifts up the quality and dignity of the life of Matthew and with the other tax collectors by dining with them.

Like Matthew, Jesus is calling us to follow Him in our day-to-day life in relating with others. We respond to his call by accepting and reaching out to those whom our group often ignored — those who feel out of place, those who are outcast, or those who are not close to us. For instance, taking care of your yaya who is sick, befriending your classmate who is lonely, protecting a schoolmate being bullied, greeting school personnel are ways of responding to Jesus’ command to love others.

The real challenge for all of us is to love the people we don’t like and to do good things to and for them because they too are loved by God. Jesus made it clear by answering the Pharisees’ remark “those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do” (Mt.9:12). These words of Jesus entail openness to His call. We are asked to set aside our biases and develop the attitude of openness.

Reflection questions:

Whom do you identify with in the story of the call of Matthew?

a). Have you ever experienced acting like a Pharisee?
b). In what way can you be like Matthew?

3. Table Fellowship: How was the acceptance of Matthew and the tax collectors shown in the company of Jesus and with his disciples?

“While he was at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat with Jesus and his disciples.”

(Mt. 9:10)

The coming together in the house of Matthew is a celebration of love and acceptance to Jesus’ call. It brings a great impact in the lives of the tax collectors because it was Jesus who initiated to dine with them. Jesus makes them feel that they are welcome in His company and enables them to relate with Jesus’ disciples. Thus, it leads them to be part of the community.

Likewise, Jesus calls us to dine with Him and to be in fellowship with Him and with the rest of the community in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Reflection questions:

a). Have you ever shared or offered a meal to someone who do not belong to your group of friends?
b). How did you make him / her feel welcomed in your group?

D. Summary

What does the gospel message mean for us today? We are called to love others because they are also loved by the Father. We are called to follow Jesus in loving, accepting, and in reaching out to others for “if God loved us so we must have the same love for one another” (1 Jn.4:11)

E. Integration

Doctrinal: Jesus reveals to us God the Father who is the source of our love for one another.

Worship: In the Lord’s Prayer, we offer our thanksgiving to God for our loving relationship with Him and are reminded of our relationship with one another as brothers and sisters.

F. Closing Prayer:

Let us all together stand and sing the Lord’s Prayer as one community.

Group 12- Grade School

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