



Community of Christ

Sharing in Community of Christ: Exploring Identity, Mission, Message and Beliefs

Lesson 3 – Our Vision

This lesson is based on 'Sharing in Community of Christ' pages 9-15, 28-30, 34, 36 and 71.

Guide Times

- Introduction – 5 minutes
- Vision 1: A Future – 15 minutes
- Vision 2: Pursuit of Peace (Shalom) – 15 minutes
- Vision 3: A Vision of Creation – 15 minutes
- Vision 4: Revelation and Continuing Revelation – 15 minutes
- Drawing it all together – 5 minutes

Select a reader for the whole session to partner with you as you lead this class. You will need scriptures (in italics) from page 14 written onto separate pieces of paper and distributed amongst the group for reading.

This lesson contains a lot of questions. Depending on the size of the group, the leader will need to give the opportunity for just a few people to answer questions - there may not be time for everyone to contribute.

Ask a member of the group to offer a prayer at the end of the class (see context in the lesson).

Introduction (5 minutes)

To start let's ask ourselves what are the various meanings of 'vision'? (no discussion)

Answers:

- a) the act of seeing with the eyes. *Sight.*
- b) the act of anticipating that which will or may come to be. *Prophetic vision or the vision of an entrepreneur.*
- c) An experience in which a personage, thing or event appears vividly or credibly to the mind although not actually present. *A heavenly messenger appearing in a vision.*
- d) A scene, person etc. of extraordinary beauty. *The northern lights.*

Question: As a young person, did you have a vision for how you would see your life?

As a young person do you have a vision for your future?

Question: What is 'Our vision' – that of Community of Christ and its members and how it calls us to journey? (If the group don't seem to know, then defer discussion as answers will become more obvious during the lesson. This question is revisited at end of lesson.)

Vision 1: A Future (page13) (15 minutes)

Reader: *Lift up your eyes and fix them on the place beyond the horizon to which you are sent. Journey in trust, assured that the great and marvellous work is for this time and for all time. (Doctrine & Covenants 161:1a)*

Discuss what you understand by the idea of fixing your eyes beyond the horizon?

Is this a call to journey to that future?

This challenge was written in the year 2000. Name some aspects of the journey we have experienced since that time.

How have we had to journey in trust?

How radical do you expect our future journey to be?

Reader: *'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. (Doctrine & Covenants 163:1)*

Question: What do you think the above scripture means when it says that 'Community of Christ is your identity and calling' ?

Suggested Answer: It is who you are, yet who you are called be.

Question: How does the call to become Community of Christ challenge you personally and the church as a body?

Vision2: Pursuit of Peace (Shalom) (pages13-15, 30 & 71) (15 minutes)

From the very early visionary days of the church, we perceived the call to 'seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion' (Doctrine and Covenants Section 6:3).

Today, we understand this as the call to 'share the peace of Jesus Christ' (Doctrine and Covenants 163:2). This finds expression in the church's Enduring Principle 'Pursuit of Peace (Shalom).' This principle is our vision for God's Peace (Shalom) in our time.

Reader: 6 bullet points on Pursuit of Peace (Shalom) from page 30.

Follow together the text regarding this Enduring Principle and what it means.

Discuss how the use of the Hebrew word 'Shalom' brings to it a richer and more visionary meaning. *(In English the word 'peace' simply means the absence of war. Shalom means peace but also justice, reconciliation, well-being, wholeness for the whole of creation.)*

Meditation and question for self-reflection: In what ways have you experienced Christ's peace (wholeness, well-being, justice in your life)?

As a group meditate on this question and have the scriptures from page 14 read, pausing between each one, guided by the leader of the lesson.

Vision 3: A Vision for Creation (pages 9-11, 34 & 28-29) (15 minutes)

Question: What are the things in the world in which we live that you find most beautiful or that give you the most joy?

Question: What are the things in this world that you love but are broken, corrupt or in need of healing?

How did this brokenness, corruption or injury happen?

What can you do to help?

What can the church do to help?

The church uses symbols that identify who we are and what our vision is. These include the church seal and the Christian cross. Show them to the group.

Question: How would you share the meaning of the cross and the church seal with someone who had not seen them before. How and why are these symbols important to us?

Our vision for creation finds expression in the church's Enduring Principle 'Sacredness of Creation'.

Reader: 5 bullet points on Sacredness of Creation from pages 28 and 29.

Question: How are you challenged to be called 'a steward of care and hope for all creation'?

Vision 4: Revelation and Continuing Revelation (page 29 & 36) (15 minutes)

Sing/read the words of Community of Christ Sings 180 "We Thank You, O God, for Our Prophets."

Reader: The section on 'revelation' from page 36.

In recent times we have been encouraged to embrace the term 'prophetic people'.

Question: What does this mean to you? Can anyone have a revelation or be prophetic?

(Answer: There may be no clear answers to these questions. Discussion around this subject is important, as the concept may be new to members of the group)

Our Doctrine and Covenants is full of revelation.

Question: How much do these historic revelations impact our lives today?

(Bring out the contextualisation of scripture)

How does scripture influence our vision for the future?

Reader: 4 bullet points on Continuing Revelation from page 29.

Drawing the lesson to a close (5 minutes)

Return to the question posed at the start of lesson.

Question: What is 'Our vision' – that of the Community of Christ and its members and how it calls us to journey? Are the group any clearer in their answer to this question than they were at the start of the class?

Question: Out of the four aspects of vision we have explored – Revelation, Shalom, Creation, the Future - which appeals to you the most?

Ask a member of the group to draw the class to an close with a prayer challenging everyone to not only be more visionary, looking beyond the horizon, but to also act on those visions.