

Ezekiel: The Health Obligations of Government
Leader's Notes – 2 Hour Session
Recommended for evening or weekend classes, such as
Tuesday 7-9, Saturday 10-12, Sunday 1-3

Objectives

- To understand Ezekiel's message in its context
- To understand why Ezekiel mentioned health care
- To establish a Biblical basis for Government action in health

Materials

- Easel, newsprint and markers
- Candle
- Handouts

1. Welcome and Opening (5/5)

- Light candle and explain symbolism of presence of God. This is an activity of the gathered church community, not a secular educational class.
- Opening prayer by leader

2. Scripture Study: Life and Times of Ezekiel (20/25)

- Have someone read Scripture – Ezekiel 34:1-7
- Toolkit 1: Life and Times of Ezekiel – Research and outline contents
- Group Discussion.
 - Discuss impact of exile on Israel
 - What was Ezekiel's message?
 - How do you think people react to the message in the 4 years before captivity?
 - How do you think people reacted afterwards?

3. Scripture Study: The Government Health Responsibility of Shepherd (20/45)

- Toolkit 2: Government as Shepherd.
 - What are other images of shepherd in the Bible?
 - How literally is the image to be taken?
 - Ezekiel says one reason for the fall of Israel is that the Shepherds of Israel didn't take care of their sheep – didn't heal their sick. How could the government of Jehoichin have impacted the peoples' health?
 - Are there ways today's governments can impact health?
 - What would Ezekiel say to today's governments if he were here?
 - What was Ezekiel's passion? How did his relationship with God affect his life?
 - Did Ezekiel believe the shepherds were to heal the sick?

4. Donna Smith: The voice of the poor (20/65)

- Did Ezekiel speak just on behalf of himself, or others?
- Toolkit 3: Donna Smith
- Who needs to speak on behalf of Donna Smith?
- Matthew 25:31-46 –Jesus as Shepherd at Last Judgment – judging between sheep and goats..
- Toolkit 4: Stewardship as Diagnostic Tool for Health and Healthcare

5. The United Methodist Church speaks to government (20/85)

- Review Toolkit 5 – UMC Resolutions 3201
- In what way is the UMC like Ezekiel? In what way not?
- What is your responsibility if you agree with these resolutions?
- What is your responsibility if you disagree?
- If the government listened to the United Methodist Church, what might the results be?.

6. Debate (25/110)

- Describe old fashioned debate – point was not the side you took, but how well you presented the arguments.
- Assign class randomly into two groups. One will support, one will oppose, the following resolution: Resolved: That if Ezekiel were in our town today, Ezekiel would be promoting a government-funded system of health care for all. **Note: it is very important that people be assigned to groups, not asked to choose groups, so as to eliminate personal investment in one side or the other. The object is to get people to think of the issues, pro and con, not to take sides right now!**
- Make a copy of “Old Fashioned Debate” (which follows) for each group, but do not hand it out until the groups have been formed.
- After 15 minutes to discuss and prepare, groups present their arguments.
- Use information and arguments presented in class.
- Concluding Discussion Questions:
 - Was Ezekiel an “Agent of God, Agent of Health? How?
 - How does the Ezekiel story encourage us to be agents of health?

7. Closing(10/120)

- Newsprint – plusses and minuses; unanswered questions
- Closing prayer with sharing of concerns

Ezekiel: The Health Obligations of Government

Leader's Notes – 1 Hour Session

Abbreviated Lesson for use in Sunday School

Objectives

- To understand Ezekiel's message in its context
- To understand why Ezekiel mentioned health care
- To establish a Biblical basis for Government action in health

Materials

- Easel, newsprint and markers
- Candle
- Handouts

1. Scripture Study: Ezekiel and the Government's Responsibility as Shepherd (15/15)

- Opening prayer by leader
- Have someone read Scripture – Ezekiel 34:1-7
- Toolkit 2: Government as Shepherd.
 - What are other images of shepherd in the Bible?
 - How literally is the image to be taken?
 - Ezekiel says one reason for the fall of Israel is that the Shepherds of Israel didn't take care of their sheep – didn't heal their sick. How could the government of Jehoichin have impacted the peoples' health?
 - Are there ways today's governments can impact health?
 - What would Ezekiel say to today's governments if he were here?
 - What was Ezekiel's passion? How did his relationship with God affect his life?
 - Did Ezekiel believe the shepherds were to heal the sick?

2. Donna Smith: The voice of the poor (15/30)

- Did Ezekiel speak just on behalf of himself, or others?
- Toolkit 3: Donna Smith
- Who needs to speak on behalf of Donna Smith?
- Matthew 25:31-46 –Jesus as Shepherd at Last Judgment – judging between sheep and goats..

3. The United Methodist Church speaks to government (15/45)

- Review Toolkit 5 – UMC Resolutions 3201
- In what way is the UMC like Ezekiel? In what way not?
- What is your responsibility if you agree with these resolutions?
- What is your responsibility if you disagree?
- If the government listened to the United Methodist Church, what might the results be?.

4. Debate (15/60)

- Describe old fashioned debate – point was not the side you took, but how well you presented the arguments.
- Assign class randomly into two groups. One will support, one will oppose, the following resolution: Resolved: That if Ezekiel were in our town today, Ezekiel would be promoting a government-funded system of health care for all. **Note: it is very important that people be assigned to groups, not asked to choose groups, so as to eliminate personal investment in one side or the other. The object is to get people to think of the issues, pro and con, not to take sides right now!**
- Make a copy of “Old Fashioned Debate” (which follows) for each group, but do not hand it out until the groups have been formed.
- After 15 minutes to discuss and prepare, groups present their arguments.
- Use information and arguments presented in class.
- Concluding Discussion Questions:
 - Was Ezekiel an “Agent of God, Agent of Health? How?
 - How does the Ezekiel story encourage us to be agents of health?
- Closing prayer

“Old Fashioned Debate”

The point is not to find a way to express your own views, but to come up with all possible arguments to support your side.

Resolved:

That if Ezekiel were in the world today, he would be advocating health care reform in the US toward a government-funded system which provides coverage for doctors, hospital stays, and pharmaceuticals to all persons – a system similar to Medicare, but for all ages.

A – Team – Supports the proposition

B – Team – Opposes the proposition

You may use arguments based on what Ezekiel actually said. You may also use modern day facts, statements and opinions that Ezekiel would not have known. You should assume Ezekiel is intelligent and is able to express the basic principles he had 2500 years ago through the facts of today.