

FAITH @ HOME

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13

REFLECT: Do you know what love is? The Bible teaches us exactly what love is in this verse. It says that love is patient (it waits and doesn't rush). It is kind (friendly). It doesn't want what others' have, or brag on itself, and it isn't rude. Love doesn't push for its own way. Love doesn't get upset easily, and it is not happy in doing the wrong things. Love helps you to carry all things, it also believes and hopes all things. Most importantly, love lasts forever. If we don't have this kind of love, our lives are like the cymbals on your favorite drum toy, noisy and loud. If we give away everything we own to put on a show, but do not have love, we have nothing and are nothing. So we should our lives by this kind of love. When all is said and done, faith, hope, and love will remain, but the greatest of them all is love.

RESPOND: Hold your child on your lap or sit on the floor across from each other. Make the following motions for I love you: Point at your chest. Then, cross your arms over your chest and give yourself a big hug. Next point at each other and smile. Explain that this can be a special way to show your love to each other, anytime, anywhere, without using words.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: QUANTRILLA ARD



Quantrilla (Quanny) Ard is a faith-based personal and spiritual development writer who lives in the DC Metro area with her husband Donny and three littles (Quentin, Dylan, and Logan). In addition to being a dedicated wife and mother, she is an entrepreneur, doctoral student, and curator of all things lovely. As a woman on her own quest of shining a light on the shadowy, hidden places in her life, she writes as the [PhDMamma](https://www.thephdmamma.com/) (<https://www.thephdmamma.com/>) about things she knows to be true in hopes to encourage others to do the same. Her spiritual goals and her love for Christ propel her quest to share the spiritual journey with other women- to walk alongside them and encourage them with words, deeds, and wisdom.

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THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13

REFLECT: Have you ever been bothered by a noise? BOOM! POP! WHAM! Recently I was in New York City with my family. Right outside our bedroom window was a large jackhammer. Every morning at 7:03 workmen would come and begin to drill into the concrete below, creating an awful clanging, banging, pounding sound. Not exactly a welcome greeting to our days. In fact, sometimes all that noise made me feel anxious and short-tempered. In today's bible verses we read about what love is like and what love is not like. Love is patient, love is kind, and love is courageous. When we do things with love in our hearts, then our actions have a calming or encouraging effect. But when we do things without love in our hearts, then our actions can be like that noisy jackhammer – disrupting and wounding. As Christians we are called to treat everyone (including ourselves) with the love that Paul describes in his letter to the Corinthians. What would the world look like if we made love a part of all our actions?

RESPOND: Play a game of Charades using the descriptors for what love is and isn't in the bible verses. If you would like add your own descriptions - what do you think love is like? What is love not like?

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: JERUSALEM GREER



Jerusalem Greer is an author, speaker, and consultant. She works as Consulting Evangelist for The Episcopal Church, and is a member of The Way of Love Working Group, and the Baptized for Life: An Episcopal Discipleship Initiative leadership team. She also manages Forma's *Faith-at-Home* resources, and serves part-time as the Minister of Formation and Connection at St. Peter's Episcopal in Conway, Arkansas. She lives with her family in rural Arkansas. jerusalemgreer.com

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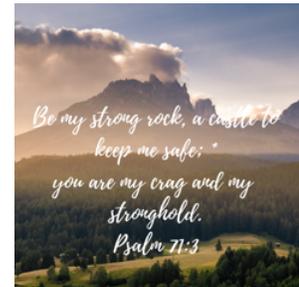
THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

ADULT AND YOUTH

READ: PSALM 71:1-6

REFLECT: Who do you turn to when you are scared or lonely? Who do you talk to when you lose confidence in yourself? I turn to the Psalms, because the Psalmist talks to God in a way I can understand. Be my strong rock, the Psalmist pleads. Be a castle to keep me safe. You are my crag and my stronghold. Imagine that God is a cave in a mountain, where outside the wind and storm blows constantly around you. Inside the cave, though, is warmth, calm, and peace. When we pray to God, when we ask God for what we need, God always listens. God wants to help us. The Psalmist reminds us that God is a powerful God worthy of praise. God is a triumphant God who leads us to victory when our enemies get too close to us. And God is a God of protection, who shields us from harm. What words do you use to talk to God when you think no one else is listening? Whatever words you choose, God hears the songs of your heart. God hears your song and thinks it is beautiful. What do you need to say to God? How can God reassure you that God is your protection?

RESPOND: What is your favorite verse from Psalm 71? What verse makes you feel calm, safe, and at peace? Make a prayer card with your favorite verse to keep in your wallet or backpack. Make a few for friends and family. You can use index cards, or make a virtual prayer card online with [canva.com](https://www.canva.com).



ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: MIRIAM WILLARD MCKENNEY



Miriam is a child of God who finds extreme joy parenting her three girls: Nia, Kaia, and Jaiya. She met her husband, David, at the Union of Black Episcopalians conference in 1981. Miriam works as Forward Movement's Development Director, and writes for their family blog, Grow Christians. She was a children's librarian and school media specialist for 20 years before joining Forward Movement's staff. She has recently discovered a love of outdoor fitness in extreme temperatures, as there is no bad weather, just incorrect clothing choices.

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THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

ADULT AND ADULT

READ: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

REFLECT: Confession: when I looked through the readings for this week, I nearly skipped 1 Corinthians. It's so well-known, so beloved, I thought perhaps it was self-explanatory and didn't need reflection. How hard can this be? Love is patient, love is kind... it bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. It's a text in which we take refuge, because we know it so well. And yet, in days like these, when we're watching children torn from their families by border agents, teens taking their own lives because they've been bullied, and natural disasters of fire and flood destroying homes, this text might actually feel abrasive. What good is a declaration like this when so much is just WRONG in the world? What good is it to believe in love so purely, so strongly, when it's so clear that so many do not, when so many refuse to live the Way of Love? Our reality is that the Kingdom of God is not yet realized, and so we labor along in this imperfect life, longing for so much more than the pain and sadness. We long for love. We long to experience love and life that is *patient, kind, not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. That does not insist on its own way; is not irritable or resentful; does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but instead, rejoices in the truth. We long for love that bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.* In the midst of this longing, it is imperative to remember this about our reality as well: The pain and the sadness we're experiencing is only part of our story. There's no way we could ever fully know the love, mercy and grace of God in this life. What we know about God and what we say about God, what we experience of God will ALWAYS be woefully incomplete. *We know only in part.* But what we do know is that all of the pieces, all of the experiences are held together by something much greater than we can comprehend. We take our longing for complete love and we live into it, believing that faith, hope and love abide. Always. When the pain and sadness of the day's news cause your heart to ache; when the struggles of work and family cause you to cry to the Heavens, take refuge in your faith in, and your hope for, the eternal, abiding love of God.

RESPOND: Which of the characteristic of love do you most need to experience this week? Envision what experiencing it looks like. Next, envision how you can offer that experience to another person this week, and take that into the world with you. Give to someone else that which you most need to receive, and see love bloom in the world.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: REGINA HEATER



Regina Heater is a self-avowed and practicing ecumenist, story-collector and story-sharer. By day, she literally people with their smiles as a dental office manager. The rest of the time she's exploring how to do faith online, from creating and posting prayers (#PrayersForDaysThatEndInY) to participating in and moderating Twitter-based communities such as #SlateSpeak and #InterfaithChat. www.reginaheater.com

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