

# FAITH @ HOME

Way of Love

Week 3: Learn

## ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

**READ:** Proverbs 2:2-4

**REFLECT:** God gave us the amazing gift of learning! No matter if you are little, or in school, or a parent or grandparent, you learn every day. Maybe you are learning to read or to count or to play baseball; God is right there with you, cheering you on. We all learn in different ways. For example, if we were learning about frogs, some of us would read about frogs, some of us would sing a song about frogs, some of us would pretend to be frogs, and some of us would go to the nature center and touch frogs. All these ways of learning is your amazing brain (that God gave you!) at work.

One way to honor God and the gift of learning is to learn about God's stories and the stories of God's people. These stories are found in the Bible. Going to church and Sunday school is one way people learn these stories. You can read them, sing songs about them, and create art about them. All of this honors God.

**RESPOND:** What is one thing that is interesting and you want to learn more about? How could we find out more about it? Where do we need to go to learn about it?

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: HANNAH GRAHAM



For nearly 15 years, Hannah has served Episcopal parish communities in a variety of Christian Formation roles. As a gifted Godly Play storyteller and youth mentor, Hannah utilizes her knowledge of child and adolescent faith development not only in the classroom, but also in executing big picture planning to enhance the shaping of Christian community. Hannah has led the Education for Ministry Program as a trained mentor for 4 years, and regularly contributes to Diocesan events, camps, retreats, and committee work. She is recognized for her innovated use of social media to integrate liturgical seasons, parish programs, music, faith at home activities and outreach. In addition to the spiritual formation of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Glenwood, Maryland, Hannah devotes herself to growing in faith as a beloved child of God, wife and mother of three boys, ages 10 months-5 years old.

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## ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

**READ:** Matthew 22:34-40; Luke 6:31; John 15:12

**REFLECT:** There were a lot of religious laws in the days of Jesus, and it was expected that people would follow the laws within their day-to-day lives, just as we are expected to do today. When some experts in the law ask what the most important law is, Jesus answers by quoting Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy, "Love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your being, and all your strength." However, Jesus then took it further by adding, "This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: You must love your neighbor as you love yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands." Not only are we taught throughout the Gospels to love and honor God, but we are also learning that we need to love one another and ourselves as God loves us!

**RESPOND:** Every day this week, put this lesson into action. You can try something new every day, or you can follow these examples:

- Day 1: Say at least two nice things to someone you either don't know well or someone you don't always get along with.
- Day 2: Do something to help around the house without being asked.
- Day 3: Give someone a hug who needs it.
- Day 4: Look in the mirror and say three nice things to yourself.
- Day 5: Share a high-five with someone and tell them they're awesome!
- Day 6: Draw or color a fun picture to give to someone you enjoy.
- Day 7: Spend time with a friend or family member by going on a walk, reading a book, sharing a meal, or another other activity you enjoy.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: ERIN WOLF



Erin Wolf is a Youth Minister hailing from Little Chute, WI where she lives with her four kids. She serves both All Saints Episcopal in Appleton and the Episcopal Diocese of Fond du Lac. Her ministry focuses include children & youth, camp & retreats, music, service work, interactive prayer for all ages, and more. You can connect with her via email at [ewolf@diofdl.org](mailto:ewolf@diofdl.org).

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## ADULT AND YOUTH

**READ:** Matthew 7:24-29

**REFLECT:** This week we are looking at the spiritual practice of learning. Recently, I was helping one of my youth prepare for a talk she was giving about reading the Bible. She said that she wished she was given any of the other topics because she was not good at reading her Bible—and I personally think she is one of the perfect people to give that specific talk. When we can acknowledge that stereotypically, Episcopalians are people who reach for our Book of Common Prayer before we grab our Bibles, then we can change it.

Why should we change it? Like Matthew is saying in this text, we have to build our foundation so that when those difficult times come: the rain, the floods, or the wind, our faith can stand on solid ground because of our learning about God and God's son Jesus through reading, reflecting, and inwardly digesting scripture.

There are plenty of ways and guides to start reading your Bible, and as a cradle Episcopalian I am going to (ironically) point you to the BCP. In the very back of the book there is a section called the Daily Office Lectionary. It is arranged in a two-year cycle, and it has a reading assigned to each day of the week based on the church season. But if tracking all that is too much, that is okay. There is an app for that! Download [BCP: Daily Office Readings App](#) and you can listen to them on the way to school, on the way to work, when you are waking up, or when you are going to bed.

**RESPOND:** Get a piece of paper and some markers. Start drawing your dream house, let your imagination run wild. Take at least five minutes doing that. What part of the house did you draw first? Did you draw the roof? The windows? The walls? Did you think about the foundation that your house is standing on? Share with each other about why we might get distracted and not focus on that foundation.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: MEREDITH ROGERS



Meredith serves as the Director of Youth Ministries at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in San Antonio, Texas. She is a strong advocate of mental health in ministry and the benefits youth can gain from a summer camping or retreat program. While she feels incredibly underqualified to be a writer on behalf of *Forma & Faith @ Home*, Meredith trusts that her voice might be one that you need to hear and knows your voice is one that the world needs to hear.

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## ADULT AND ADULT

**READ:** Matthew 5:1-11; 43-48

**REFLECT:** One of my favorite ways to think of Jesus is as a teacher. He set an excellent example for us – like setting boundaries and creating space between himself and the crowd. He rested when he needed to, which wasn't nearly enough, and had a team of supporters who managed the details. My favorite aspect of Jesus' teaching is his repetition. All good teachers know that important lessons bear repeating. Think about how you learned basic math facts and sight words: you practiced them over and over again. Whenever Jesus uses the same words, again and again, it's time to pay attention.

In this scripture from Matthew, Jesus gets right to the point. Here are the people who are blessed: the poor in spirit, the merciful, and the peacemakers. And here's how you can be blessed, if you don't fit into any of those categories: follow me and admit it. In the last part of chapter 5, Jesus teaches us to pray for our enemies. That's a lesson that bears repeating. Each week at youth group, we pray for the people who we were at odds with during the previous week.

When you read all of Matthew 5, you might come across some teachings with which you don't agree. Disagreeing with Jesus is okay. You might want to seek different translations of this chapter or talk with a person knowledgeable about scripture about your questions. Part of learning is challenging what we read and hear, and I think Jesus would encourage us to ask questions.

Jesus gives us what we need to live God's commandments. He tells us repeatedly who to pay attention to and what to do. How we respond to these lessons is up to us.

**RESPOND:** Add one new way that you will engage with scripture this week. Here are some ideas for engaging with scripture: commit to read a chapter or a book of the Bible; sign up for social media that shares daily Bible verses and meditations; read the daily lectionary; or share your favorite verse with your family and talk about them.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: MIRIAM 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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