

FAITH @ HOME

Week of May 19, 2019

Fifth Sunday of Easter

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: Psalm 148:5-6

REFLECT: The psalms are some of the oldest prayers of God's people. We have been praying them together for as long as the Church has existed! Jesus prayed the psalms with his family and friends, too. One of the best lessons we learn from the psalms are all the different ways we can pray and talk to God about how we feel, what we are thinking, or might need some extra help with. The psalms also tell us that the whole earth—the dirt, the sky, all the animals, the wind, all of it—is very special to God, and God has a special relationship to the earth. Psalm 148 tells us a special story about how everything in and on and around this very special planet praises God. You and your family and friends can read through this psalm any time you like, but we hope that today you will read it and think about how all the things in your life—the stuff in your house or your book bag or your lunchbox—tell you how much God loves you.

RESPOND: Spend some time wandering around the house with your littles. Do the light switches praise God? What about the washing machine? The dishes? How about your pets or the animals who live in your yard? What do you think they thank God for? What do they remind you to thank God for? How will this change your nightly prayer time?

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: RACHEL JONES



Rachel Jones is the associate editor for Forward Movement. She and her husband live on a farm with a dog, too many cats, several rabbits, and a flock of very opinionated chickens.

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ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

READ: John 13:31-35

REFLECT: Are there any words that your parents or grandparents use to show you that they love you? Maybe a nickname? I'd like to use my father as an example; his name is Michael. I call him Dad, but my cousins call him "Uncle Mikey." Mikey has been his nickname since he was in elementary school. Many years have passed since my dad was in grade school. It is pretty funny to me that an older graying man is known as "Mikey" to the people that love him. In this reading, Jesus calls the disciples "little children" not because they were actual children, but because of Jesus' great love for them. Jesus uses a nickname, or a term of endearment, for the disciples before He equips them with the mission of love. Tender words and nicknames show us that our family members love us and this love make us strong so that we can go about our daily work. Jesus' love gives us what we need to go and live like Him.

RESPOND: Here's a way that you can cross boundaries - consider sitting with a different group of people at lunchtime. If that makes you nervous, then start by talking to people that you don't normally talk to. After a while, you can sit with them.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: IMANI DRISKELL



Imani Driskell is the Director of Children's, Youth, and Family Ministries at St. Michael's-in-the-Hills Episcopal Church in Toledo, Ohio. Imani was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York and is a bagel and pizza enthusiast. She enjoys learning, teaching and speaking about Faith Formation. Her favorite novel is *The Living is Easy* by Dorothy West.

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ADULT AND YOUTH

READ: John 13:31-35

REFLECT: Imagine sitting in a room full of your closest friends, knowing that one of them would betray you and you were going to die soon. What would you say to the rest of your friends? In this passage, Jesus is sitting at the table giving some parting words of wisdom to the rest of the disciples.

His words “you’ll not be able to come where I am” remind me of coming into adulthood. You have a short time to be under your parents care and then it's time for you to navigate the world on your own. Jesus was never going to stay with the disciples on earth forever, that wasn't his purpose. His purpose was to be a living example on this earth of how we should love people and point people to Christ. He tells the disciples, “Love each other just as much as I have loved you. For when you demonstrate the same love I have for you by loving one another, everyone will know that you're my true followers”. Our purpose is to love people like Jesus did and invite them to experience the love and grace we do each day because he died for our sins.

How are you representing Jesus to those around you?

RESPOND: Find ways to display acts of kindness to one person each day. This could be as simple as holding the door open for someone, buying someone coffee, offering to help someone with an assignment, running an errand for your parents, helping your younger sibling with homework, etc.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: FAITTH BROOKS



Faith is the Communication and Programming Director for Legacy Collective. She engages in community organizing and activism. Her passion makes her a relentless spokesperson for racial reconciliation. She is a social media strategist and blogger who writes at Faitthbrooks.com.

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ADULT AND ADULT

READ: John 13:31-35

REFLECT: A story circulated a number of years ago following a massive forest fire in the western part of the U.S. As a firefighter was combing an area that was burnt, he heard the sound of baby birds chirping. He did not know how anything could have survived because the area was completely destroyed. At the base of a tree, however, he found the charred remains of a mother bird with her wings outstretched over her babies. She gave her life so that her babies would live. Those chicks were received as a sign of hope in the midst of despair and that mother was recognized for her sacrificial love.

Jesus had that kind of love for us. It is odd for us to see glory in death, and yet the glory of God can be found in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. Jesus told His disciples that they could not follow Him where He was going, although eventually most of them were martyred in His name. Jesus had to complete the work of the cross before they could go on to do the work of the kingdom in this world. He left them with one thing: each other. It seems odd that He would call loving one another something new, since God always intended His people to love. Yet, this new love is deeper; it radiates from our lives as we share the Gospel, marking us as disciples of Jesus Christ.

RESPOND: Prayerfully consider who in your life needs Jesus' love and share His story with them.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: PEGGY HOPPE



Peggy Hoppes is a writer, artist, photographer and crafter; her creativity reflects her faith. She is married with two grown children. She began writing "A WORD FOR TODAY," a devotional, in August 1999 which can be found at <http://www.awordfortoday.org>. Peggy teaches a Bible class at her church and has led workshops. She has published several books. Peggy shares her gifts to build up the church, to help Christians grow as disciples with living faith, and to be a witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the world.

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