

FAITH @ HOME

Week of May 26, 2019

Sixth Sunday of Easter

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: John 14:25-27

REFLECT: In our story from John's gospel, Jesus spends a long time explaining to the disciples that He has to go away and prepare a place for them, but is coming back soon. While He's gone, God will send a special friend to be with the disciples, what John calls the Advocate, and in Acts, we here this special friend called the Comforter. This Advocate and Comforter is the Holy Spirit. This is God's Spirit—and the Holy Spirit comes to us in all sorts of amazing ways. Maybe you have a special blanket or soft toy that helps you feel confident or helps you go to sleep. Maybe you have special prayers you say at night or in the morning or when you are feeling nervous. When you feel hopeful or strong, confident and courageous, that is the Holy Spirit inside you—making you brave and big-hearted!

RESPOND: In your prayers this week, take some special time each day to say thanks for your special lovies—your blankets or toys—and the special people who help you feel brave and strong when things are hard. Spend some time talking with your little ones about the people, prayers, and items in your life that help you feel brave and connected to Jesus.

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 14:23-29

REFLECT: When in your life do you feel scared? Maybe it is during a thunderstorm. Maybe it is at night when you are trying to fall asleep. Maybe it is when you have to make a new friend or try something new. Maybe it is when you are in an unfamiliar place. Think about when you are scared, and how you feel during those times.

In this reading from John, Jesus tells the disciples not to be scared, because He will always be with them. What comforting words to hear! Jesus sent His followers out into the world to share the good news, which is scary. The disciples didn't know what would happen. However, they had the reassurance that Jesus would be with them wherever they went. He would be with them, even if He was not there physically. When we face scary stuff, Jesus is with us, too!

RESPOND: Find a rock or other object that you can keep in your pocket, backpack, or other safe and accessible place. Whenever you feel scared, grab your object and use it to remind you that Jesus is present, even during scary times!

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: VICTORIA HOPPES



Victoria Hoppes is the Camp Director at Waycross Camp and Conference Center and the Youth Ministry Coordinator for the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis. She has ministry experience with youth, family, and camping programs at both the parish and diocesan levels. She holds degrees from Texas Lutheran University and Luther Seminary. She also holds a certificate in Youth and Family Ministry from Forma's certificate program. You can follow Victoria on her website, www.ministryincontext.com, or on social media (@vlhoppes).

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ADULT AND YOUTH

READ: John 14:23-29

REFLECT: Today's Gospel is part of what we call the "farewell discourse." Jesus is preparing His disciples for His departure that is coming very soon. This isn't the first time Jesus has told them He will be leaving them, and I suspect the more they hear it the more they are beginning to really believe it. But do they fully understand what that means for them? He tells them what He expects of them—how they are to live when He is no longer with them AND He assures them they will not be alone. Even if the disciples don't fully understand these words right now, they will remember them in the days and weeks to come—perhaps when they are feeling scared, lonely and vulnerable, and also when they feel the love and peace of God through their relationships with one another. They will remember that Jesus GAVE them peace. It's a gift for the taking.

RESPOND: There is a story about a young girl who calls out to her parent throughout the night with fears of the dark. Over and over the parent responds, "You are not alone, God is with you right here in your heart." The third time the parent recites these words the young girl says, "I know God is with me in my heart, but right now I need God to have some skin on." Think of a time when you felt the love and peace of God through others. Who was the presence of God with skin on for you? Share the story with your family or write the person a note and let them know.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: KATHERINE DOYLE



Katherine is the Coordinator for Youth and Young Adult Ministries and the rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Kentucky. She lives in Louisville with her husband and whichever of her four young adult children happen to be home at the time. Katherine's greatest joy is being a mama: first to her own four and then to all the children, youth, and young adults who call her Mama Doyle. She often finds God in the ordinary messiness of everyday life and writes about it on her blog thesixdoyles.blogspot.com.

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ADULT AND ADULT

READ: Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5

REFLECT: There are so many images in the vision of heaven found in John's words. We can't even imagine the reality of the City of God, the New Jerusalem. We want to relate these images to our human experience, but John was describing the indescribable with words to which his readers could relate. He saw something that was immense, magnificent and greater than anything in this world.

Can you imagine a tree that could bear a different type of fruit each month, with a harvest that could feed the saints of every time and place? We automatically think of fruit like apples, oranges and peaches on a tree bearing fruit, but what if the Tree of Life bears fruit in keeping with faith? Suppose the fruit was that which is found in Galatians 5: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. They say you are what you eat, and a world filled with saints expressing the fruit of the Spirit would be wonderful.

We try to imagine what John is describing, but our imaginations are so limited. We will be delightfully surprised to see the City of God, to dwell in the presence of God and the Lamb, to drink from the River of Life and to eat of the Tree. And though it will be greater than we can ever imagine, it will be personal and intimate and perfect.

RESPOND: Using words, music or art, share your vision of what heaven will be like.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: PEGGY HOPPES



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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