

FAITH @ HOME

Week of June 2, 2019

Seventh Sunday of Easter

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: Revelation 22:14

REFLECT: Why do we wash things like our hands, clothes, bed linens, or some toys? Why in the world are people washing things in Heaven? When we read Revelation, we may ask ourselves a bunch of questions that are really hard to answer. But the question about washing things is a good one—why do we wash things? We wash the dirt or the grime or the icky off of things we want to use over and over, or things we share. We want to keep things nice and well taken care of—our bodies, our clothes, the stuff we like. We want to feel cute and clean when we go places to see people we love—like to church, or a party, or to see our family and friends. Life can get us pretty dirty, even when we try really hard to stay clean and out of messes. But God has given us the gift of water—to help clean up our hearts (like in Baptism) and to clean up our bodies (like in a bath), and when we use water well, we are good helpers to God and each other.

RESPOND: This week, take special time to pray with your little one every time you encounter water—filling up your water bottle for the day, taking a bath, helping with laundry, if it rains, when you give your pets water, etc. Remind them of how special water is, what a holy gift it is, and how blessed they are to have clean water in their lives and houses.

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 17:20-26

REFLECT: Prayer is an important part of our lives as Christians. Even Jesus prayed! In this passage from John, we read a prayer that Jesus prayed for his followers. Jesus prayed that all of his followers would be one and that they would share God's love with the rest of the world.

I think that Jesus would pray this prayer today, too. I think that He would pray that all of His followers would be one because we are all members of God's family! Even though we have different stories and come from different walks of life, we are united because of our common faith and our common goal to share the good news of Jesus with others.

RESPOND: With your family and friends, make a symbol of how we are one in Christ. Make a paper chain out of strips of construction paper. On each strip of paper, write the name of a family member, friend, or other person in your life who shares your faith in Jesus. Use the strips to make loops, and attach the loops together to make a chain. Hang the chain in a place where you will see it and remember to pray for the body of Christ every day.

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: Acts 16:16-34

REFLECT: Can you imagine? Paul and Silas are traveling, preaching, healing, and teaching. They are tired and this girl is annoying them. But she is tortured. While she is making her owner's money, I would bet she is seeing none of it. They respond. But it doesn't end. Paul and Silas are dragged into the city square, for doing what they thought was right—for following God's call, and they are falsely accused. No one stands up for them and they are thrown in jail.

The earthquake comes, they are freed, and they STAY! I wonder if they worried about what would happen to the jailers if they left? I wonder if they thought about the fact that no one stood up for them? I do know because they stayed, despite their own discomfort and despite they were treated unfairly, others came to know God. Their actions spoke. Paul and Silas knew whatever happened to them God loved them and was faithful. Their behavior let others know as well.

RESPOND: Have you ever been in a situation where you could "save" yourself, where you could get yourself out of trouble? What did you do? Have you ever seen someone's behavior or has someone ever seen a behavior in you that illustrated God's love and faithfulness?

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: Psalm 97, Acts 16:16-34

REFLECT: Paul and his companions were trapped in a Philippian jail. They made the best of things, worshipping God together despite their difficult circumstances, but they were probably also praying for a miracle to set them free. It is natural and human for us to look to our God to get us out of trouble after all.

A violent earthquake struck shook that the foundations of the prison were shaken, opened the doors and the unfastened the chains were unfastened. The prisoners could have been free, but Paul believed that when God intended for them to be free, God would accomplish it in a way they would be truly free. Escape would have meant that they would have been fugitives and the jailer would be dead. God took care of them in God's time and God's way. Meanwhile, the jailer experienced God's grace and believed in Jesus.

The psalmist wrote, "Those of you who love the Lord, hate evil! God guards the lives of his faithful ones, delivering them from the power of the wicked." God is supreme over all things and knows what is best for us. Our circumstances may not seem good, but we can trust that God is faithful. Sometimes we'll find ourselves trapped in a prison or in the middle of an earthquake, but as we trust in God and do what is right, we will find that God's blessings are even greater than we ever expected. For Paul, the blessing was obvious when a new Christian was brought to faith by their witness and their action. Their faith and patience meant that another voice joined the song of the saints worshipping God and praising God's name forever.

RESPOND: Join in the worship of God with the choir of saints over time and space by singing a hymn of praise.

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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