

FAITH @ HOME

Week of June 30, 2019

Third Sunday after Pentecost

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: Galatians 5:22-23

REFLECT: If you love other people, you treat them with kindness. If you are happy, you smile. If you care about a pet, you will be gentle with it and take good care of it. How you act shows how you feel inside. Your parents, teachers, and other adults who love you show you they love you by taking good care of you. If you like hugs, maybe they give you lots of hugs; maybe they spend time reading and playing with you. That's how you know they love you.

Have you ever seen an apple tree? You know it's an apple tree because apples grow on it. You know a pear tree because pears grow on it. In the same way, when we remember that God loves us, we are filled with love. When we are filled with love we treat others with kindness and gentleness. We are like the tree and what we do is like the fruit that shows others how much we love them.

RESPOND: Cut out or draw a tree. Have an adult help you cut apples, oranges, bananas, and other fruits out of construction paper. Write the kind and loving things you can do for others on the fruit, and then glue them to the tree.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: JEREMIAH SIERRA



Jeremiah is currently the communications manager for Cities of Service, a nonprofit that works to change the way local government and residents work together. He has worked for a variety of other nonprofit organizations and Episcopal churches, most recently Trinity Church Wall Street, where he was the managing editor of the quarterly magazine. He has written for *Forward Day by Day* and other publications about faith. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife and three-year-old daughter.

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ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

READ: Galatians 5:22

REFLECT: I learned a silly song in elementary school about the fruits of the spirit. We would repeat three times the line, “The fruit of the Spirit’s not a banana,” and then we would sing this list of the true fruits of the Spirit. We would sing the song over and over, substituting new and wild fruits for the first part—kumquats and kiwis and cantaloupes. The hard part though was remembering all of the fruits of the Spirit. That’s true not just in singing the lyrics but in our lives. It’s easy to remember the fun parts of this fruits but it’s harder to put them into practice, especially when it requires giving up something or changing our behavior. Sure, we love our brother or sister, but do we show that love even when he or she is being mean to us? Are we kind to people at school, even when they don’t show kindness back? Are we patient with our parents, even if they are impatient with us? The fruits of the Spirit aren’t easy (and they’re not bananas, either), but they are gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit, and God wants us to use these gifts in our homes and schools and daily lives.

RESPOND: Take a shopping trip to the grocery store and buy fruit to fill a basket. On a sheet of paper, draw the basket of fruit with its berries, apples, oranges, bananas, or other favorites, and then label each with one of the fruits of the Spirit. Which fruit will you choose to pick from the basket? How will you practice your spiritual fruit today?

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: RICHELLE THOMPSON



Richelle Thompson lives in the beautiful bluegrass of Kentucky, near Cincinnati, with her husband, their two children, a horse, a cat, and two dogs. She serves as the deputy director and managing editor of Forward Movement, a ministry of the Episcopal Church and publisher of the daily devotional, *Forward Day by Day*.

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ADULT AND YOUTH

READ: Luke 9:51-62

REFLECT: Have you ever heard the Church hymn that asks the questions *“Will you come and follow me if I but call your name? Will you go where you don’t know and never be the same?”* The Summons is one of my favorite hymns, and I know most of the words and sing it loudly and proudly. But, today’s Gospel lesson has me truly questioning---What is your answer to these questions? Jesus has once again charged us to follow Him, in a journey unknown, a journey that is far from being easy, a journey that goes against the status quo and societal structures. How willing am I to walk this path? Following in the footsteps of Christ calls for us to step into places where we might not have imagined that we would go. Walking in a way of love brings us into relationships with people that are different from us, or people who society has placed on the margins. As a youth minister, the youth of my parish and I would always find ourselves experiencing some of the difficulties, but also the abundance, of life and love that paves the way of Christ on our mission trips. When we left after spending a week or more at our site, we always wondered how we would bring what we learned, what we experienced back into our day-to-day lives. In today’s Gospel lesson, Jesus is reminding us of just that. We are to follow Him every day of our lives. Beyond Sunday, beyond one mission trip, but our lives are all to be fulfilling and living in the mission of God.

RESPOND: Will you come and follow Christ if Christ were to call your name? This day, this week, and this summer, how will you be living a life as a disciple of Christ? How will you be following the way of our loving God? And how might others recognize it?

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: CHRISTOPHER DECATUR



Christopher is a seminarian at Virginia Theological Seminary and a postulant in The Diocese of Ohio for holy orders. Prior to seminary, Chris served at Trinity Cathedral in Cleveland, OH as the Associate Minister for Children, Youth, Family, Young Adult and Campus Ministries. Chris also has served as “The Chair of The Subcommittee for Racial Reconciliation and Justice for The Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music.” Chris comes from an undergraduate degree in Comparative Religion from Cleveland State University and years of studies and practicing of Early Childhood Education at both CSU and as a student at The Catholic University of America. Chris is currently serving as The Outreach Coordinator for The Center for The Ministry of Teaching at Virginia Theological Seminary and a Catechist for Baptized for Life: An Episcopal Discipleship Initiative.

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ADULT AND ADULT

READ: Psalm 16; Galatians 5:1,13-25

REFLECT: In *Psalms for Praying*, Nan Merrill's re-visioned writing of the book of Psalms brings a liveliness and intuition to the text that speak to many a soul. The first verse of today's Psalm reads thusly: "Remain ever before me, O Living Presence, for in You am I safe. You are my Beloved, in You I can do all things." (Psalm 16: 1) Imagine – what our world would look like – how our churches would be transformed – if Christ followers could do all things safe in God's love, living in the Spirit? Galatians reminds us that we are called to freedom; and not to use our freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence. Rather remember the single commandment we are given: to "love your neighbor as yourself." When we live by the Spirit, it prevents us from doing what we want. The fruits of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are what we offer one another. The quarrels we get into and witness, the jealousy and envy we can feel and see around us, the dissension and factions apparent in our governing bodies at times, and the idolatry we find in ourselves and our culture could be overcome if we lived safe in God's love knowing we can do all things.

RESPOND: Reflect on what it would mean for you personally to "live by the Spirit." Is this any different from how you try to live now? How many fruits of the Spirit do you think others see in you? If you want to learn practices to develop more of a life lived by the Spirit, talk to your clergy or a Spiritual Director.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: JAN BERRY SCHROEDER



Jan works in several churches building family ministry programs. As a Shalem-trained Spiritual Director, she works with individuals and families on deepening their faith practices. As an emerging blogger, she lives beside an apple orchard with her husband and rescue dog and has discovered how apples grow – they hang!

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