

# FAITH @ HOME

Week of July 21, 2019

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

## ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

**READ:** Luke 10:38-42

**REFLECT:** We live in a busy world. There is always something that could distract us from hearing Jesus whether it be activities, expectations, social media or something else. In our Gospel message this week, we encounter Martha, who “was preoccupied with getting everything ready for their meal” when Jesus visited her home. Martha became frustrated because her dear sister, Mary, was simply sitting at the Lord’s feet while Martha did all of the work. As I read this passage, I could strongly relate to Martha, but the wisdom of Jesus is so clear. He tells her that while she is “worried and distracted by many things,” Mary is focused on the ONE thing that truly matters: Jesus. As adults, how do we teach our young children the importance of letting Jesus be the strongest voice we hear in a world full of distractions? Maybe the first step is for us to take the time make it a priority to sit at Jesus’ feet and listen to him through worship, prayer, and simply resting in him.

**RESPOND:** Listening is something we focus on a lot with young children. Take some time to listen for Jesus. Listen to a Christian song or hymn together, either at home or on a car ride, and encourage your child to listen to what the song is saying. When the song has finished, ask if there was a word or phrase that stood out in the song and what it might mean. Use this as an opportunity to share about how God speaks to us in different ways like the Bible, songs, prayer and other people, and how it is important for us to always be listening to what Jesus might be saying to us.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: MEREDITH EHLER



Meredith Ann Ehler spends her days juggling life as a mama, wife, and daughter of God in San Antonio, TX. She gained over eight years’ experience with hands-on parish ministry as both a Youth & Children’s Minister before being called to focus on full-time momming for her two children, Camille and Camden. When she is not chasing her own kids or folding laundry, she enjoys helping with her congregation’s children’s ministry, reading, and living her best life. She has a passion for Jesus and sharing his love with children and families in practical, relational ways.

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## ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

**READ:** Luke 10:38-42

**REFLECT:** How easily do you get distracted? At school, do you sometimes forget to put your name on a piece of paper or find out you did not follow each step of your teacher's instructions? Have you ever been thinking about other things when adults in your family are trying to explain something they want you to understand or remember? Are you distracted now?

It's easy to get distracted. It happens to everyone. It's not bad or wrong; it's just something that happens. But what happens after you get distracted is up to you. You can keep getting distracted, or you can choose to pay attention less to the distractions and more to what is important.

In today's reading from Luke, Martha is distracted by trying to make Jesus feel at home when Jesus is visiting. This is not wrong. She loves Jesus so much that she wants everything to be perfect while Jesus is there. But, she is so distracted that she is missing out on actually spending time with, talking to, and listening to Jesus. And Jesus cares about spending quality time with people like Martha (and like you) way more than Jesus cares about if your room is clean or if there is a really good dinner on the table. Jesus is asking Martha (and you) to try your best to turn away from all the distractions and spend some quality time together.

**RESPOND:** Schedule quality time with family this week. Grab a container and label it as "Distractions." Turn off all electronics. Place cell phones and other devices into the container. You may also want to have notecards so that people can write out any thing that is particularly distracting them. Fold the notecards up and put them in the container.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: PATRICK KANGRGA



Patrick Christopher Kangrga is the Associate for Youth Ministries at Trinity Episcopal Church in Menlo Park, California. Originally from Arkansas, he left home to participate in two years of the Episcopal Service Corps in Maryland and in Massachusetts. After this came the beginning of his lay-professional journey with positions at parish and diocesan levels in New York and New Jersey. He has primarily served youth, with a foray into children's ministry.

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## ADULT AND YOUTH

**READ:** Luke 10:38-42

**REFLECT:** Whenever we hear this story, we frequently are asked to see who we identify with more: the sister who was easily distracted or the sister who dropped everything to focus on Jesus. Both Mary and Martha have traits that are worth embracing, though. They both embody hospitality in different ways. Martha wants to make the physical space “perfect,” and Mary wants to give her undivided attention to their guest. While putting distractions aside is all Jesus asks for, what would it look like if Martha had just let the space be what it was once Jesus arrived, or invited Mary and Jesus into the kitchen as she prepared a meal? When we allow tasks to get in the way of spending time with those who are important with us, we miss out on our relationships.

Quality time is an important part of building relationships. We are all busy. We all have things we need to get done. Sometimes it’s more fun to do something with a friend! In these moments, we see that being in relationship with someone is not about what extravagant plans we put together or what serious discussions we have. When we are together doing our everyday tasks, we relax and are able to just be.

**RESPOND:** If you have an errand or chore this week, invite a friend to join you. As a family, wash the cars or go grocery shopping. Practice being fully present, as Mary was, while creating the welcoming and hospitable space that Martha was distracted in creating.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: MAGGIE PAUL



Maggie Paul is the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries at the Cathedral of St. Philip in Atlanta, Georgia, where she has developed and implemented a comprehensive confirmation curriculum for the largest cathedral parish in the Episcopal Church. As an undergraduate with a passion for youth ministry, she served as a summer camp counselor and Episcopal student center "church mouse," and she continues to use her gifts and talents as a singer and musician to nurture her own journey and inspire others on theirs.

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## ADULT AND ADULT

**READ:** Luke 10:38-42

**REFLECT:** Some days, I'm a "Mary" – I spend my day in reflective contemplation and study, I find adequate time for prayer, and I allow my mind to really ponder the deeper questions of life, faith, and love. And other days, more often than not, I'm a "Martha" – I spend my days working, balancing my time between meetings, emails, pastoral conversations, managing programs, etc. I don't believe that either of these ways is better than the other. In the Gospel reading this week, Jesus doesn't correct Martha for doing the important work of hospitality, but instead because she is "worried and distracted," particularly regarding Mary's non-assistance while working away.

How do we often get caught up in our own worries and distractions that we lose sight of Jesus? How do we sometimes focus more on what other people are doing and what they aren't doing that we fail to realize the Divine One at work in our lives and theirs? Christ offers us the same words that he speaks to Martha: "One thing is necessary." If we are living out the role of Martha and our day is full of action, may it also be filled with the acknowledgment of the presence of Christ with us. If we are embodying the way of Mary and we are focused on contemplation and reflection, may we give our full awareness to the One who is always present and speaking. And that will never be taken away.

**RESPOND:** This week, set a reminder on your phone or computer for every day at a different time to become aware of the presence of Christ. No matter what you are doing, take just a moment to see how Christ is there with you.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: CLAYTON HARRINGTON



Clayton is the Episcopal Campus Missioner at the University of Georgia. He is also the Rector's Associate for Youth and Young Adult Ministries at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Athens, Georgia. In these roles, Clayton is passionate about the potential of Christian community, worship, and service to empower youth and young adults to grow into the people that God has made them to be. Before moving to Atlanta in August of 2014, Clayton earned a BA in History and Religion from Campbell University in North Carolina (May 2014). Clayton is a graduate of Candler School of Theology, having earned a Master of Divinity with a Certificate in Episcopal Studies (May 2017). Clayton is a postulant for Holy Orders in the Diocese of Atlanta.

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