

FAITH @ HOME

Week of July 7, 2019

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: Luke 10:1-9

REFLECT: When farmers plant corn or strawberries or wheat, they need people to help them pick the corn and strawberries and gather the wheat. Then they can share the food with others. They may also need people to help them milk the cows or gather eggs from the chickens. Farmers can't do everything on their own. They need helpers. Jesus is like the farmer, and he asks for our help, too. He wants us to help others and to tell them that God loves them.

Jesus sent the disciples to go help others. They cured sick people and told people that God loves them, which made them feel good. We are Jesus's disciples, too. We love other people like God loves us. We tell them that even if they have done something they should not have done, God still loves them. And we help people whenever we can. God shows God's love to other people through the kind things we do and say to others. We are God's helpers.

RESPOND: Print and color this picture of a farm: <http://bit.ly/farmcoloring>. Talk about how you might help the farmer by gathering corn or feeding the pigs. Then talk about how you help other people in your own life, like family members, friends, and classmates.

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: Luke 10:1

REFLECT: Jesus is sending his disciples into the world to share the Good News. One meaning of the word disciple is “spokesperson,” meaning that these people are speaking and telling others about Jesus. But Jesus knows this can be hard work. So he sends the disciples out in pairs. Being a Christian is not a singular activity; it’s not something that can be done alone. We need others to join in our prayers, to break bread together during communion, and to study God’s Word. Why do you think God thinks it’s a good idea for us practice our faith with others? Is that helpful or harder?

RESPOND: In the next line of this passage, Jesus asks us to be the workers (laborers) in the field. He is talking about us sharing the good news. One way to understand the relationship between working in the mission field and gathering the harvest is to volunteer at a community garden. Plan to spend a couple of hours weeding the garden or picking the vegetables. What lessons can you learn about your life as a disciple from this physical act of collecting the harvest?

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: Galatians 6:1-16

REFLECT: “My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.” At the beginning of this Scripture, we hear about the practices that are being asked for us to keep maintaining Christian community.

During disunity, Paul is constantly reminding his disciples that they are called together as one body. As Episcopalians, our Baptismal Covenant is a bind that keeps us bound together in a way of life as the body of Christ and as a Christian community together.

RESPOND: In your faith community, what are ways that you have established being a healthy and accountable community to one another? What about in youth group? Sunday School? Or at home? How is your faith binding you with others?

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: Luke 10:1-11; 16-20

REFLECT: *Tidying Up* is a current TV show that begins with Marie Kondo greeting the home she is about to tidy. A quick Google search finds a thread that asks whether or not Christians should participate in this ritual house greeting. In the passage from Luke, Jesus instructs His followers that when they enter a house, to first say “Peace to this house.” If someone who “promotes peace is there, the peace will rest on them.” If it is not there it will return to the follower. Most of us are familiar with blessings such as the blessing in a service given by a priest or the blessing or grace said before a meal. In the creation story, God blesses everything God creates. In Luke, Jesus instructs His disciples to greet no one on the road but their first act upon entering a house is blessing its occupants, not greeting the house. We can greet anything animate like a person or our pet; or inanimate like a house. But when we offer a blessing, it comes from a relationship with God. We are personally calling down goodness that comes from God and asking that it dwell over whomever or whatever we are blessing. Naming the moment through a blessing allows us to “taste and see that the Lord is good.” (Psalm 34:8)

RESPOND: Look for opportunities to give blessings. When we wake, we can choose to make the sign of the cross over ourselves to bless the day as it begins. When our roommates, partner or children leave for the day, we can bless them and their day. At meals, recall that Jesus gave thanks and blessed the food before eating. Be like Jesus! For more information on blessing practices go to: <http://bit.ly/celticblessing> or <http://bit.ly/artofblessing>.

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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