

FAITH @ HOME

Way of Love

Week 7: Go

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: John 20:21

REFLECT: Jesus calls us to go out into the world and be like Him. He wants us to meet new friends, friends who look like you and friends who don't. Friends who live near you and friends who live far away. Friends who enjoy playing the games you play and those who like to play different things than us. Jesus wants us to stick our hand out and say "My name is Hannah, what's yours?" Jesus wants us to share our food, take care of the Earth and stand up and do the right thing.

RESPOND: Go out into the world and show the love of Jesus! Here are some ideas of what you can do:

1. Help out a neighbor with yard work. Help them pick up sticks or dig holes for flowers.
2. Practice recycling at your house.
3. Look for kids on the playground you might not know, introduce yourself, and ask them to play.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: HANNAH GRAHAM



For nearly 15 years, Hannah has served Episcopal parish communities in a variety of Christian Formation roles. As a gifted Godly Play storyteller and youth mentor, Hannah utilizes her knowledge of child and adolescent faith development not only in the classroom, but also in executing big picture planning to enhance the shaping of Christian community. Hannah has led the Education for Ministry Program as a trained mentor for 4 years, and regularly contributes to Diocesan events, camps, retreats, and committee work. She is recognized for her innovated use of social media to integrate liturgical seasons, parish programs, music, faith at home activities and outreach. In addition to the spiritual formation of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Glenwood, Maryland, Hannah devotes herself to growing in faith as a beloved child of God, wife and mother of three boys, ages 10 months-5 years old.

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ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

READ: John 20:21

REFLECT: Back in 2014, Bishop Michael Curry told the high school students and adult leaders at the Episcopal Youth Event that he felt one of God's favorite words was, "GO!" Why? Because whenever God wanted to change the world, God would tell someone to GO! If you think back to the stories of different people in the Bible, most people are responding to a call to GO and do something in the name of God. Jesus was particularly good at encouraging people to put their faith into action, to bring love to people where they were at.

There are a lot of ways to GO into the world and bring God's love to others. And it's important to remember that loving others as God loves us means to give and love without expecting anything in return. That can be very hard to do for some people. For others, it's easy. But to GO and love others as Jesus did is something most everyone can practice and keep working at. Every act of kindness shown to another person changes the world bit by bit. Think back to times where someone did something nice for you just because they wanted to or because they could—how did that make you feel? Loved? Happy? Excited? It changed you in that moment for the better because the giver showed you love. That's what we are called to do as Christ-followers in the Episcopal branch of the Jesus movement! We are called to GO out into the world and be carriers of God's light and love in the world.

RESPOND: Where can you GO out into the world to be the hands and feet of Jesus? How can you show God's love to others? Consider going on a prayer walk in your neighborhood with a grown-up or two and some friends. Take some sidewalk chalk with you to leave pictures or words of hope and love for your neighbors to see. Pray for the people of the area as you go.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: ERIN WOLF



Erin Wolf is a Youth Minister hailing from Little Chute, WI where she lives with her four kids. She serves both All Saints Episcopal in Appleton and the Episcopal Diocese of Fond du Lac. Her ministry focuses include children & youth, camp & retreats, music, service work, interactive prayer for all ages, and more. You can connect with her via email at ewolf@diofdl.org.

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ADULT AND YOUTH

READ: Matthew 28:16-20

REFLECT: One summer, I had the opportunity to serve on the staff of a beach camp for middle school students on the Texas gulf coast. Each day, staff would lead a small group Bible study, which we were required to do in a public place. We did our studies on the front porches of surf shops, or in ice cream shops, or on the beach, or in the parking lot of a popular restaurant. During each Bible study, our campers were challenged to talk to people on their street about faith; we asked passing tourists questions and shared a little bit about what we were learning that day.

We met all sorts of people. Some were not very friendly, and didn't want a group of teenage girls talking to them about Jesus. However, some people were genuinely interested in hearing what we had to say. We talked about the Bible, and prayer, and we heard the faith stories of people from all walks of life. We stepped out of our comfort zones and went into our host community, seeking the presence of Christ in the world around us. We shared God's love with everyone who we met (even those who weren't willing to talk to us.)

Following the Way of Love at home with our family and friends is great, but Jesus commands us to GO out into the world and share God's love with other people! We are called to step out of our comfort zones and share the gospel with everyone we meet. We don't always have to ask people questions about their faith or share our faith stories with others (though that's a great practice!); even the simplest actions of kindness share the good news of Christ's love with the world. We just have to GO and be an example of the good news to others!

RESPOND: Find one way that you can go out into your community and share the love of Jesus this week. Maybe you can do a prayer walk around your neighborhood. Maybe you can volunteer with a local food pantry, soup kitchen, or other agency. Maybe you can help a neighbor with some yard work. GO out and share your faith with others through word and action!

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 Faith Formation Academy. You can follow Victoria on her website, www.ministryincontext.com, or on social media (@vlhoppes).

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ADULT AND ADULT

READ: Matthew 28:16-20

REFLECT: Recently, I met a woman who aspires to holy orders in the Episcopal Church – let’s call her Ruth. She is a strong witness to the faith and proclaims the good news of Jesus everywhere she goes. She has a Bible nearby with passages marked with color-coded flags. I don’t know what the colors mean, but I feel sure she has a system of organization to help her find the appropriate verse at the right time. This woman is not wealthy or sophisticated. She works at a big-box store and insists on never working on Sundays so that she can attend worship. Honestly, I don’t know if I’ve ever met someone who believes in living the gospel just as Jesus and Paul instructed us to do. She is a constant evangelist and witness for Christ.

When I think about going into the world and sharing the good news of Jesus, all of my introverted nature gathers herself and walks before me like a shield. But a friend of mine bought me a t-shirt to help me break the ice. It’s an iPhone call from Jesus, and you can choose to answer or decline the call. Wearing it always starts conversations with people of all ages, usually younger adults or kids. Lots of people stare, and when I wonder why I remind myself oh yeah, it’s probably the shirt.

Why is it so hard for us to talk about Jesus? What are we afraid of? Doing so doesn’t negate anyone’s beliefs if we’re worried about offending people. The worst that might happen is a person tells you they don’t want to hear it. Okay, how ‘bout those White Sox? Many have died for our faith throughout history, and that’s unlikely in casual conversation.

As I continue to practice the Way of Love, I’m trying to be bolder in my witness. I can say that I’ve been blessed many times in my life. I have no problem talking about God or the Spirit. It’s time for me to be more like Ruth. I will, with God’s help.

RESPOND: Talk to one person about Jesus this week – preferably a stranger or someone not from your faith community.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: MIRIAM MCKENNEY



Miriam is a child of God who finds extreme joy parenting her three girls: Nia, Kaia, and Jaiya. She met her husband, David, at the Union of Black Episcopalians conference in 1981. Miriam works as Forward Movement’s Development Director, and writes for their family blog, Grow Christians. She was a children’s librarian and school media specialist for 20 years before joining Forward Movement’s staff. She has recently discovered a love of outdoor fitness in extreme temperatures, as there is no bad weather, just incorrect clothing choices.

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