

FAITH @ HOME

Week of October 13, 2019

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: Luke 17:11-19

REFLECT: “Thank you” is among the first phrases we learn to speak or sign. Maybe your parents have asked you “What’s the magic word?” or to “Remember to say ‘please’ and ‘thank you.’” We do not always remember to say “thank you.” Sometimes we might remember, but say it without really thinking. I wonder if thanks is the same as gratitude.

In our family, we roll a prayer cube to help us say grace at dinnertime. There are many ways to say grace. Sometimes I recite the words without thinking, but certain phrases (like “truly thankful” or “the hands that prepared”) help me stay present and remember our many gifts.

We are called by Jesus to follow the Way of Love. In today’s Gospel, the tenth Leper—a Samaritan—is so overcome with gratitude at being healed, that he turns back. He turns toward love, and away from injustice and fear. He throws himself at Jesus’s feet and thanks him, praising God in a loud voice. His faith has made him well. For what he has received, we know that he is truly thankful.

RESPOND: How can you express gratitude? Create thank you cards as a family project, and carry them in your bag for spontaneous “I thank/appreciate/see you” notes. Make eye contact when you thank the grocery clerk, barista, or person who holds the door for you. Take an extra moment when you pray to breathe in gratitude and offer thanks to God for your blessings. When you are sad or angry, take a moment to search for an “attitude of gratitude.” Even among hardships, are there things for which you can be grateful? Someone else might be thanking God for you right now!

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: AMANDA WISCHKAEMPER



Amanda Wischkaemper is devoted to telling and hearing stories, building relationships, and finding reasons to laugh. She is a professional actor, dialect coach, theatre educator, and dog-person. In her 13th year of Episcopal Children’s Formation, she currently serves as Director of Children’s Ministry at St. David’s Episcopal Church in Austin, Texas, alongside her Music Director husband (Mark), and turbo-toddler (Abby).

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ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

READ: Luke 17:11-19

REFLECT: In the time that Jesus lived, leprosy was a common and dreaded disease. Because leprosy was very contagious, those afflicted lived together in groups away from unaffected people. Ten lepers--from different tribes and faiths-- were walking along the road and they called out to Jesus, "Master, have mercy on us!" He looked at them in their misery and pronounced them cured. Only one of the ten paused to thank Jesus for his mercy. The one who thanked Jesus was a Samaritan--a stranger in the land.

Sometimes we ask God to help us. Our problems and worries may not be as obvious as leprosy, but they can be overwhelming and isolating if we don't ask for God's help. We don't always even know what we need, but God does. Every day God shows us mercy and all that is asked of us is that we stop and say thank you. Prayers, or conversations with God, are more than just asking God to do things for us. Prayers are also listening and being grateful for God's blessings.

RESPOND: Jesus asked, "But the other nine, where are they?" Saying thank you is something that God expects us to do. Make a visible way to say thank you at home. Take an empty jar and a bag of colorful pom-poms. Every day put a pom-pom in the jar when you think of a way that God has helped you. We call this our "warm fuzzy" jar. It's just a way to express feelings of gratitude for God's blessings.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: LISA PUCCIO



Lisa Puccio is the Coordinator for Special Needs Worship and Family Formation at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas. Lisa leads Rhythms of Grace Houston, a weekly worship service for special needs families, and oversees ministries for children and parents at St. Andrew's. She has worked in parish ministry since 2002, served two terms as vice president of Forma, and is a member of the diocesan formation advisory committee in the Diocese of Texas. Lisa and her husband Mike have four grown children.

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ADULT AND YOUTH

READ: Luke 17:11-19

REFLECT: When things are hard, when we feel lonely, when we are sick, and when we are scared, it is easy to cry out to God for help. Crying out to God may not be easy, but it is often a reaction to the situation. Sometimes, we cry out to seek God's guidance, presence and love. But what about when life is going well? When the "traumatic" event/feeling/situation passes? Do we remember to thank God?

RESPOND: Name out loud with your family examples of when you reached out to God during difficult times. Spend a few minutes in prayer thanking God for being present during those times.

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: Luke 17:11-19

REFLECT: Have you ever held a door open long after someone has passed through, waiting for but not hearing a “thank you?” It has happened to me, and I find myself so miffed with the interaction that I mutter under my breath, “You’re welcome.”

We find no muttering from Jesus in today’s reading in Luke. Instead, the Scripture says that Jesus told the lepers to go and show themselves to the priest, and that as they went, they were made clean. No thanks required.

I wonder if some of them failed to notice the healing they had received. It is interesting to note that it was the Samaritan leper, rather than those lepers raised in Jewish homes, was so overcome with the gift of Jesus’ mercy that he could do nothing before he stopped in gratitude to thank the One who opened the door to healing for him. I pray today we remember to pause in gratitude and give thanks.

RESPOND: I wonder what gratitude to God would look like in your life today. Would you write it? Sing it? Paint it? Run it out? Could you find a way to thank God for past things? Perhaps things you blew right through and forgot to thank God for? I love keeping a gratitude journal because it’s like a running list of ways God has stepped in and shown me in both big and small ways of the door held open for me. The Gratitude 365 app is the easiest way for me to keep that running list of thanksgivings. My phone is with me throughout the day when I want to take note of something. I snap a picture and write down ten gratitudes every night before bed. Gratitude is something we practice, which is good news because that means we continue our conversations with God, and God with us.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: KARIANN LESSNER



KariAnn Lessner has led youth and children’s ministries in The Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Texas for over twenty years. Currently the Minister for Children and Families at Christ Church Cathedral in Houston, she loves serving as a summer camp session director at Camp Allen and is a frequent speaker to women’s groups throughout Texas. In addition, she produces the podcast “You Brew You,” where she sits down with folks to share what God is brewing in their lives in the hopes that each person is infused with grace and courage by the other’s faith. She enjoys spending time with her family, hammocking, reading, and sipping sun tea in the great outdoors.

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