

FAITH @ HOME

Week of May 24, 2020

Seventh Sunday of Easter

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: Acts 1:6-14

REFLECT: Do you like pillows, blankets, fuzzy socks, snuggles, or hot chocolate? Even if you don't, it's ok! These are just a few things that people like to feel comfortable. Sometimes you may not even know the things that make you feel comfortable until they are gone. Like the end of a big bear hug from your favorite family member, you miss the warmth of their closeness once it's over. Well, in our reading today, we read about the disciples seeing Jesus go back to heaven. They hadn't totally understood Jesus' plan and were sad and a little confused before he left. But Jesus is such a good friend, that he didn't leave them without sending them the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who would lead and guide them and fill them with power after he left. We can be sure that the Holy Spirit is still comforting us today, just as with the disciples, as Jesus promised. We are not left alone.

RESPOND: Draw a picture on a white piece of paper with a pencil. Then, erase the picture as best as you can. What do you see? Is the picture totally gone? Talk to a trusted adult about how you can remember the picture because of what was left behind.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: QUANTRILLA ARD



Quantrilla (Quanny) Ard is a faith-based personal and spiritual development writer who lives in the DC Metro area with her husband Donny and three littles (Quentin, Dylan, and Logan). In addition to being a dedicated wife and mother, she is an entrepreneur, doctoral student, and curator of all things lovely. As a woman on her own quest of shining a light on the shadowy, hidden places in her life, she writes as the PhDMamma about things she knows to be true in hopes to encourage others to do the same. Her spiritual goals and her love for Christ propel her quest to share the spiritual journey with other women- to walk alongside them and encourage them with words, deeds, and wisdom. Quanny believes in the power in collective strength, community and fellowship. You will find her wherever people are sharing stories of triumph.

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Seventh Sunday of Easter

ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

READ: John 17:1-11

REFLECT: One of my favorite songs begins with the line “have you ever felt like nobody was there? Have you ever felt forgotten in the middle of nowhere?” Most people I know would answer both of the questions from that song: “yes.” Whether it’s during recess when no one wants to play or feeling let down by a friend or family member, we all feel alone sometimes. In this passage Jesus ascends, leaving his friends on earth, but certainly not leaving them alone.

Jesus prays that all the people who love and follow him would be one, just like the Father and Jesus are one. God gives us family, friends and people in our churches and communities to walk alongside us and remind us that we are never alone. It can be hard to love people sometimes! But Jesus prayed that the Holy Spirit would help and empower us to love each other well. How can we show love for others today? How do you know when others love and support you?

RESPOND: Ask each person in your family how they know when someone loves them? What does love look like or sound like to them? For example, some people feel loved and comforted when people give them a hug, others feel most loved when people take time to listen to them and speak compassionately with them. Once everyone has talked about their answers, work together to make a poster about the ways your family shows and receives love. Hang the poster in a place where you’ll see it to remind you that as we show one another love, we are also showing each other what God’s love is like.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: MEGAN WESTRA



Megan is on the pastoral staff team at Transformation City Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Her first book, *Born Again and Again*, releases in August with Herald Press. More of her work can be found at meganwestra.com or on Twitter at [@mwestramke](https://twitter.com/mwestramke).

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Seventh Sunday of Easter

ADULT AND YOUTH

READ: 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

REFLECT: In this passage, Peter is preparing the believers for the tests and trials that will come their way and reminding them to rejoice in suffering. Following Jesus does not free you from suffering here on earth. Trials will come and test your faith, but be encouraged because you are not alone. Jesus does not leave you alone during times of suffering; we have the Holy Spirit, an advocate and comforter to guide us. Jesus' desire is that we cast our cares on Him. Sometimes in our suffering it can feel isolating, like we are the only ones experiencing hard times, but none of us are exempt from pain and suffering. We all have good and bad days. Be encouraged, if you feel lost and hopeless, because God is for you and loves you. Jesus does not delight in your pain; he grieves with you when you are hurting and He will never leave you. It's through Jesus' restoration and healing power that families have been restored, lives are changed, and hearts are healed and mended-it's all because broken people submitted their hearts and lives to Jesus. I can tell you that Jesus is worth committing to.

RESPOND: Pray this with your family: "Lord even in my weakest hours, I need you. Help me to cling to you in times of trouble and hardship. Help me to rest in you when life feels tiring and things feel unbearable. I know with you I can overcome obstacles and difficulties. Thank you for restoring, strengthening, and establishing me in you. Amen."

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: FAITTH BROOKS



Faith is the Communication and Programming Director for Legacy Collective. She engages in community organizing and activism. Her passion makes her a relentless spokesperson for racial reconciliation. She is a social media strategist and blogger who writes at Faitthbrooks.com.

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Seventh Sunday of Easter

ADULT AND ADULT

READ: John 17:1-11

REFLECT: We are nearing the end of Eastertide. Jesus, born at Christmas to live among us in the flesh, now moves to dwell no longer in the world, but eternally with God. In the Great Vigil of Easter, the liturgy reminds us that God is the “Alpha and the Omega.” (The beginning and the end.) Father Richard Rohr refers to this as being “bookended in a Personal Love – coming from Love, and moving toward an ever more inclusive Love.” (*The Universal Christ*, p. 95) The message of Easter is hopeful, good news. In spite of Jesus no longer being with us in the world, we are united in a love that is always present, always growing and expanding, always evolving with us, as we grow ever closer to God and Jesus. Brightness and luminosity are implied by “glory” or “glorified,” which are used six times in this passage alone. It can leave us with a sense of wonder and awe as we are lifted to a place of union secure knowing that God and Jesus come to those that love them and make a home with them (John 14:23) so that we may be “one with them as [they] are one.” (John 17:11b, NRSV)

RESPOND: Sometimes we may become numb to familiar scripture readings and find that they are not resonating in the same ways they have in previous years. Spend time in the Word reading John 17:1-11 with focus. Be present to how it speaks to you. Google “glory” to learn of the many different meanings of the word in different faith traditions. Then, take the meanings and ideas that come to you and know them in your heart. Notice how your heart responds. Note the qualities within your heart as you mull over the meanings and messages you received from this time of reflection. You may feel your heart open and expand with an inner peace. Know this place of deep blessing. End with a silent prayer of thanksgiving.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: JAN BERRY SCHROEDER



Jan is in private practice as a Spiritual Director working with individuals and groups on deepening their faith through contemplation and other spiritual practices. She teaches Education for Ministry (EfM) at her church and consults with churches to build or enrich family ministry programs. A new writer, she is looking forward to launching a blog this year. She lives beside an apple orchard with her husband and rescue dog.

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