

FAITH @ HOME

Week of June 23, 2019

Second Sunday after Pentecost

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: Galatians 3:26-28

REFLECT: We are all different. We look different than one another, we live in different places, we like different things, we speak different languages. Each of us has different things we like and different things we can and can't do. Maybe you can run fast but your friend can't. Maybe your hair is darker or curlier than your friend's hair. It's good that we are different. God made us this way.

There is one way that we are all the same: God loves all of us. Even if sometimes we've done things we should not have done, God still loves us. Jesus shows us how much God loves us. When we remember that, it is easier to love each other, too. And it's easier to love people who are different than us.

RESPOND: Think about people you know who are different than you: other children at your school, people in your family, or your friends and teachers. Draw a picture of them. Make sure you are in the picture, too. Talk about how you are different. Have you ever felt bad about being different? Have you ever felt good about being different? Now draw a big circle around everyone in the picture. That circle is God's love, surrounding all of us.

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: Psalm 42:1-3

REFLECT: Two months ago, a talented, kind, and always-smiling student at our middle school died suddenly. Her death has been very difficult to understand and to process. Many of her friends are asking, “Why did God let her die?” “Where is God?” Maybe you have had something bad happen in your life—you’ve lost a friend or a parent or a grandparent. A beloved pet died, or you’re facing a bully at school or a challenge at home. In the midst of the pain and anger, it is natural to ask these questions. Don’t feel ashamed or like you’re not a good-enough Christian. God is big enough to handle our questions and our doubts, our worries and our disappointments. Later, this psalm offers us a promise from God that God is with us “in the daytime; [and] in the night season.” We may not understand everything now; our tears may be our food day and night. But even then—especially then—God is with us.

RESPOND: Are you having a tough time? Be brave and ask to talk to your priest or pastor about what’s going on in your life and about questions you might have about God. They have these same questions, too. You are not alone.

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: Luke 1:57-80

REFLECT: In Luke's Gospel, we hear the story of John the Baptist. "What will the child become?" many asked as John was given his name. Zechariah was then filled with the Spirit and prophesied before all who were gathered and the child, saying that "John would be the one who will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins." I love this narrative as it gives the beginning of John the Baptist's call story. Each of us have been called into several ministries, several vocations, that we will discover as we walk through life and discern where God is leading us. Not all of our stories might seem as extravagant as this calling of John and many others who we hear in Scripture, but they each are as holy and God-filled.

RESPOND: Creating a mind-map, or even talking with friends or family, outline and discuss your answers to the following questions: where has God called me from? Where has God called me to? Where has God called me out of? Where has God called me despite of?

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 8:26-39

REFLECT: There are those who long for God. There is a faith and trust that God responds to our need. In Luke's story, a man possessed by demons and unclothed throws himself before Jesus and begs Jesus not to torment him. He only knows torment from the "legion of demons" within him. Yet his actions belied a deep yearning for Jesus that he does not know he has, nor understands. Something stronger than demons in him recognized and wanted Jesus. And Jesus wants to help him-giving the demons permission to enter a large herd of swine who then rush down a steep bank in to a lake and drown. When people come to see what has happened, they find the "crazy" man sitting at Jesus' feet, clothed and in his right mind. They do not seem to understand what healing has just taken place. There is no rejoicing that the man is no longer crazy or thanks giving to God for the miracle in their midst. Instead, they are "seized with fear" and ask Jesus to leave. Reflecting on this story from Luke, I wonder if some of what we witness in the daily news is a fear response to things people don't understand. They are seized by fear of the unknown instead of coming from a place of faith and trust that God responds and assists us.

RESPOND: Would you side with the people in this story in Luke and be seized with fear? Now reflect on your own life for a moment. When might you have encountered a situation you did not understand? Did you seek to understand, or were you seized by fear of the unknown? Psalm 42:9 says "One deep calls to another..." When we seek a deeper understanding of God, it can lead us to a deeper knowing, a deeper trust and faith that God really does respond and assist us.

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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