

FAITH @ HOME

Week of June 28, 2020

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Adult and Small Child

Read: Matthew 10:40-42

Reflect: Welcome is an important word for Jesus—so it's important for us, too. When someone is baptized, we talk about welcoming them into the family of God. When we have a new person move into our building or our classroom, Jesus would probably want us to welcome them into the neighborhood, into our friend-family. We can welcome new friends in many ways—by smiling or waving, by saying Hello and learning new names, by sharing a snack or a juice box, coloring a picture, or sharing a toy. The best thing we can do with new friends is to be kind, to think about how Jesus treats his friends—he prays for them, he spends time with them, he thanks them for being his friends, and he always helps them. You can be a friend like Jesus, just by welcoming people and being kind.

Respond: Find out if your little has any new classmates who will be joining in the next year or if there are any new little neighbors who have moved into your community recently. Those folks and families may be looking for a little welcome. Come up with some ways to include and welcome them into your circle.

Adult and Elementary

Read: Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18

Reflect: I really admire the Olympic gymnast Simone Biles. I am amazed that she can do so many twists and turns while up in the air. When you admire someone, you tell them how much you appreciate them and the things they do. If I ever have the chance to meet Simone Biles, I will tell her that I appreciate how she has revolutionized gymnastics. When I pray, I tell God all about the things that God does that I appreciate.

Respond: Think about the things you appreciate. When you pray, tell God how much you appreciate these things.

Adult and youth

Read: Matthew 10:40-42

Reflect: Have you seen a sign outside of an Episcopal Church that says, “The Episcopal Church Welcomes You”? There was one outside the church I grew up in. They were popular back then and continue to be today. They are meant to show that no matter who you are, you are welcome here in God’s house and at God’s table. This idea of radical welcome gets at the core of Jesus’ life and teachings, as we see in this reading. Jesus calls us to welcome all people, and the way we welcome them matters, especially into a house, God’s house. Everyone should feel at home and welcomed into God’s house. The whole purpose of churches and temples, God’s house, is to provide a place where we can come close to God and God can come close to us. How is that possible if we are not welcoming everyone in? If we are to welcome in people as neighbor and friend, then we may find a new friend in them, and we never know when someone else might need a new friend.

Respond: Take the time to practice radically welcoming someone, whether that’s simply smiling at them, or holding a door for them, or saying “hello!” While it may not seem like much, a small, caring gesture like that could mean the world to someone else.

Adult and Adult

Read: Matthew 10:40-42

Reflect: “You’re the only Jesus some will ever see.” These words begin the chorus of the song “You’re the Only Jesus” by The Imperials. It continues, “And if not you, I wonder who will show them love?”

In the Gospel story this week, Jesus says that those who welcome us, welcome him, and those who welcome him, welcome God. It’s easy to lose the sense of how I represent Christ to those who I encounter. If I am an ambassador of Jesus, then I should live every day with the awareness that I really may be the only Jesus that some people will see. I have a duty and a privilege to share the love of Jesus with those I encounter.

As followers of Jesus, we are meant to be signs of the presence of God, like temples of God’s love. This is a responsibility that we assume by virtue of our baptism. It is our daily ministry to be vessels of the presence of God in our world and to, in some way, show Jesus to every person we meet.

Respond: Print out a picture of Jesus, or the word Jesus, and put it in a prominent mirror in your home. Every time you look in the mirror, remind yourself that you are called show people Jesus and the love of God in this world.