

FAITH @ HOME

Week of November 8, 2020

Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

REFLECT: It is hard for people we love to go away. When people we love die, we feel really sad, because we miss them. When our friends have loved ones die, we feel sad for them, too, and sometimes we are not sure what to say.

Jesus' friends and family felt sad like this when he died too. They felt scared and lonely. But something amazing happened- Jesus came back to life after three days and never died again! After this happened, Jesus went to heaven to be with God.

Paul, who wrote the letter to the Thessalonians, said that death won't be forever. One day, Jesus will make everyone alive again to be with Jesus and one another forever. Paul didn't say this to make us feel scared or more sad, but so we can have something called hope. Hope means we have faith or trust in something, and in this case, we believe that we won't be separated from the people we love forever.

RESPOND: Not all small children have experienced death, so they might not understand the concept well. If this is the case, you might tell stories about the life of someone you love who died, and what makes you excited to see them again one day. If a small child in your life has experienced death and has questions, some great books you might read aloud together are: "The Tenth Good Thing About Barney" by Judith Viorst (the death of a pet), "Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs" by Tomie dePaola (death of a grandparent) and "The Invisible String" by Patrice Karst.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: MICHELLE BULLOCK



Michelle Bullock serves as Rector at St. Peter's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church in Swansboro, NC. She has a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education (Appalachian State University) and Master's of Divinity (Duke Divinity School) and has a background in youth and children's ministry, and formerly served as a school chaplain. She and her husband have two daughters in preschool and elementary school. You can follow Michelle on her website at revbullock.com.

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ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

READ: Psalm 78

REFLECT: In biblical times, there weren't Bibles like we think of them today. The stories of the Bible were written on clay tablets or the skins of animals or chiseled into stone. Very few people had access to these written stories so they relied on storytelling to share God's Word. Parents and other adults would tell the stories over and over, maybe around a campfire or the dinner table, while they gardened or hunted or walked to river beds and wells to collect water. They told the stories of Adam and Eve, Noah and the flood, Jonah and the whale, and Moses and Jacob. These stories were so important that they told them again and again, so that the children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren would know them and believe them.

RESPOND: Plan a family storytelling session. If it's the right weather, gather around a campfire. If not, set aside time without any distractions. Tell some of the stories of your family and ancestors, ones that have shaped your lives and told you important lessons. Invite your children to think about and share some stories from their young lives that they want their family to remember. Then talk about the importance of telling the story of God. Invite each person gathered to share their favorite Bible story too.

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: Matthew 25:1-13

REFLECT: Today's lesson comes from the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids. This parable follows the story of 10 bridesmaids who went to meet the bridegroom. Five are described as wise and bring oil for their lamps and five are described as foolish and not prepared with oil in their lamps. When their oil runs out and the wedding banquet finally begins, the foolish bridesmaids are off buying more oil. The point of this parable is actually fairly simple. We do not know the day that Jesus will return, but will we be prepared? Five of the bridesmaids were not prepared for the long wait. They did not bring enough oil. Jesus tells us to be like the wise bridesmaids that were prepared. We must be ready to wait.

RESPOND: Do you know someone who is never prepared? Maybe they are always late or they never have their homework done. Their life always seems to be in crisis because they are never prepared. Right? How does being prepared make life easier? What has Jesus asked us to do? How should we be prepared? What steps should we be taking now to prepare? Make a list of the ways you can prepare for Jesus' return.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: LAUREN WAINWRIGHT



Lauren Wainwright currently serves as the Director of Student Ministries at Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Dallas, TX. She has worked with large and small churches across several dioceses over the past 13 years, serving in youth ministry. Lauren is originally from Hattiesburg, Mississippi where she first began her call to ministry but has called Dallas home for the past 4 years. In her free time, she enjoys reading, Netflix watching, and spending time with her 2 dogs at home.

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ADULT AND ADULT

READ: Psalm 70

REFLECT: We are shown many times in Scripture that we have a God who liberates us through bondage. But, yet, I find myself at times crying out today in this world: “You are my helper and my deliverer; O Lord, do not tarry.” as many (maybe even ourselves) sometimes find ourselves walking in times feeling hopeless, loss, or distant from our God. God’s hand reaching out to lift us from the darkness and to bring us to the light, can sometimes not look how we expected it to. Maybe it was a text from a friend when feeling discouraged, maybe it was prayer read aloud in worship, or even a song overheard from a stranger while walking down the sidewalk. It can be hard to remain faithful when feeling so poor in Spirit, or hungry for justice; especially when God doesn’t seem to be coming speedily. But, as our Biblical Ancestors have shown us, Hope does come in the morning, and sometimes it looks beyond how we would’ve ever it imagined it to appear.

RESPOND: What is the psalm that you are crying aloud today? The Psalms have been sung and prayed over the years, bringing alive the prayers that remain to be true to many of our hearts today. But these texts were also personal, and can be your words too. Whenever you find yourself needing time for prayer, reflection, or for God’s hand to reach down to you on this day, try writing a psalm of your own. It may be a psalm of thanksgiving, or psalm of lament. Your prayers too, can have such a poetic shout, and bring hope, and reveal Gods wondrous love dwelling in your midst!

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: CHRISTOPHER DECATUR



The Rev. Christopher Decatur is the Deacon in Charge at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Cleveland, Ohio. He is a graduate of Virginia Theological Seminary. 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 has 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.

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