

Bringing Church Home – January 14, 2018

Bible Bites

These short passages come from the Lectionary readings for today.

Monday	1 Sam. 3:2-9	The Lord just won't let Samuel sleep
Tuesday	1 Sam. 3:10, 11	Samuel finally gets with the program
Wednesday	Psalms 139:1-3	The Lord knows me inside out
Thursday	1 Cor. 6:19	The Holy Spirit lives in me
Friday	John 1:47-49	Jesus knows Nathanael even before they meet

Ritual

An activity to try at home

Reading through a short Bible passage several times is an ancient prayer practice. It's called *lectio divina*, or holy reading. The idea is not to analyze the passage but to experience Christ as the Living Word. Read through the short passage from Psalm 139 or John 1 above and then try these steps:

- ❖ Read the passage carefully. What catches your attention?
- ❖ Meditate. Read it again and let your mind explore. Ask questions.
- ❖ Pray. Read it again and speak to God with or without words.
- ❖ Contemplate. Read it again and close the Bible. Rest in God.

Holy Conversation

Talking points for a family or small group conversation

- What is wonderful about you that only God knows?
- The Psalm says it's impossible to escape from God's loving attention. How is that different from the Santa Claus who "sees you when you're sleeping, who knows when you're awake, who knows when you've been bad or good, so be good for goodness' sake"?
- What does God know about you that you'd prefer to keep a secret?
- Can you imagine a situation when you might pull out Psalm 139?

Caring

An idea for putting faith to work

If God knows each of us so well, how should we react or respond? One possibility is to get to know your friend or family member even better than you do now. You could really, *really*, listen carefully. Pay close attention to

the words. Pay close attention to the tone of voice, the expression on the face, the body language. Guess what? You could try this with a stranger too.

A Prayer for the Week

Here's a prayer that acknowledges how well God knows us. The priest says it at every Eucharist. You can find it in the Book of Common Prayer at 355.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Are there some words here you need to look up? Inspiration? Magnify? Then write the prayer in your own words and give it to your rector.]

A Blessing

*You could place your hands on another and say this blessing.
You could also say it tenderly for yourself.*

You are created, known and loved by God.
Never be afraid, for God's hand leads you and holds you fast.

Bible Verse for the Week

If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me,
and the light around me turn to night,"
darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day;
darkness and light to you are both alike. (Ps. 139:10,11)

A Poem for the Week

Here's a short poem with a haunting last line by Mary Coleridge (1861-1907).

I Saw a Stable

I saw a stable, low and very bare,
A little child in a manger.
The oxen knew him, had him in their care.
To me he was a stranger.
The safety of the world was lying there,
And the world's danger.