

Faith Formation Resource - Week of 7/19

Note: There is no Children's Church resource this summer. Instead, you are invited to check out our summer storytimes on Youtube!

Based on the results of our survey of families, we are experimenting with the Faith Formation resource - gearing it to better serve teens and adults, rather than young children. Please continue to let us know what you think!

The daily readings in the lectionary this week tell the story of the reconciliation of Jacob and Esau. So this week's Faith Formation Resource is about reconciliation!

Something to read:

The story of Jacob's reconciliation With Esau, from Genesis 32-33:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+32-33&version=ICB>

An analysis of the passage from a Reform Jewish perspective:

<https://reformjudaism.org/meeting-jacob-and-esau-healing-open-wound>

Something to watch:

As the reading above notes, Jacob reconciles with Esau, but never really apologizes for tricking him. How are we called to apologize? Well, Hank Green has some ideas about how NOT to do it:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qc_XWlqURTg

The vlogger Chescaleigh has some thoughts about how to apologize when you are called out for saying or doing something that offends a group or minority:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8xJXKYL8pU>

Sometimes a whole country needs to apologize for its actions before it can move forward. Here's a story about Canada's Truth and Reconciliation commission:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zuRQmwaREY>

Something to listen to:

Just for fun - and certainly not as a model - Christine Lavin's "A Musical Apology:"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_6XMqcEqil

The other half of reconciliation - after the apology - is forgiveness. Matthew West has a song about that: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1Lu5udXEZI>

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Something to do:

The first thing to do here is obvious: If there's someone you need to apologize to this week, do it!

The second is almost as obvious: if there's someone you need to forgive, do it!

Something to pray:

I could pretend to write something better - but this 9-yr-old has me beat before I start:

A PRAYER FOR RECONCILIATION

*I pray for peace between countries.
I pray for people to reach out to other people
with the hand of generosity
And not to be unkind but to care;
Not to argue but to open up discussion;
To be friend and not fight or bully;
To accept others nationalities and not be racist.
To look for the good in other people and not find
fault in others;
Not to be bewitched by money but to give to the
poor
Not to use religion as a weapon but to use it as a
support and actual faith.
And finally, not to hate but forgive and love.
AMEN*

*Catarina Mesquita-Reynolds, aged 9
St Richards CE First school Evesham*

A prayer practice to try: Loving-Kindness Meditation

This is a meditation practice meant to expand your sense of compassion toward yourself and others. Find a place where you can settle and be quiet, sit down and close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths, and relax any tension you notice in your body. Direct your attention to yourself, and think/say these words:

1. May I be happy
2. May I be safe
3. May I be healthy, peaceful, and strong
4. May I give and receive appreciation today

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Then think of a person you love, and direct the sentences toward them:

1. May you be happy
2. May you be safe
3. May you be healthy, peaceful, and strong
4. May you give and receive appreciation today

Continue directing the sentences toward new people, going from those you love, to some you feel neutral about, to people you find difficult. End with a prayer for all people, or all beings:

1. May all be happy
2. May all be safe
3. May all be healthy, peaceful, and strong
4. May all give and receive appreciation today

Take a few moments of rest after this last prayer, and then open your eyes and go about your day.

Want to know more? Here are links to a few articles about loving-kindness meditation and its benefits:

<https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-practice-loving-kindness-meditation-3144786>

<https://www.mindful.org/this-loving-kindness-meditation-is-a-radical-act-of-love/>

<https://www.themindfulchristian.com/blog/lovingkindness>