

FAITH CIRCLES *connect*

5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER • YEAR B

1. Welcome your Guests
2. Share Food & Drink
3. Worship Song
4. Read the Sunday Gospel

JOHN 15:1-8

Jesus said to his disciples:

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear even more. You are pruned already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you.

Make your home in me, as I make mine in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, but must remain part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing.

Anyone who does not remain in me is like a branch that has been thrown away - he withers; these branches are collected and thrown on the fire, and they are burnt.

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask what you will and you shall get it. It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit, and then you will be my disciples.'

5. Personal Sharing

In the weeks before meeting today, a member of the group was invited to prepare a short, 5-7min, sharing on how this Gospel reading connects with their life and relationship with Jesus. The reflection questions below may assist in preparing for the sharing:

1. Share a little of your experience of remaining in relationship with Jesus. In what ways have you been 'pruned'? How has Jesus nurtured the relationship and how have you nurtured the relationship? How has this relationship brought you to life?
2. Where have you seen the fruits of your relationship with Jesus? Have there been times when you've tried to 'go it alone'? What happened then?

6. Share in Smaller groups

Once your nominated speaker has shared their story, break into smaller sharing groups to reflect on the above questions. Each person shares their experience of God since last gathering in light of the Gospel message.

1. How is everyone going? (Consider "high/low")
2. What jumped out/touched/resonated with you from the personal sharing?
3. Have you experienced that in your life?
4. Was there another point from the Gospel that really struck you?

7. Worship & Prayer**Worship**

Singing together as a group is a vital part of each connect group gathering. Our worship draws our focus to God and all that God has done for us. As St Augustine reflected 'the one who sings prays twice'.

Play a song or hymn as a way of entering into a time of prayer. You may like to use some of the resources provided in our music guide.

Pray for Each Other

Remain in your smaller discussion groupings of 3-5 people. Invite the Holy Spirit to be present and invite group members to pray aloud for each others' needs. Enable time for people to share their prayer intentions. Individuals might like to pray for themselves or ask someone else to pray for them.

Closing Prayer

After people have had time to pray for one another in their smaller groups close the evening with a final prayer in the large group. A suggestion might be:

Loving Father, we thank you for the love and care you have for each of us. Fill us with your Holy Spirit that we may continue to draw strength from you and follow your will in all we do. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen