

## Lessons and Activities for Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

### Collect Reflection

When I read this, I am immediately struck with the thought: This.....this is what I want our community truth to be. Read this week's collect silently or aloud. What does it mean to you?

*Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

### Gospel Story: Welcome, Jesus

Jesus says to his friends, "Whoever welcomes you, welcomes me." "That sounds easy," says James. He turns to Peter and gives him a hug. "Welcome, Jesus!" says James. Jesus laughs. "That's right. You share in my work. I share in your life. When people see what you do, they see me. When people welcome you, they welcome me." "Even if they just give a hug?" asks Peter. "Even if they just give a cup of cold water," says Jesus. "If people give even a drink of water to you because you are my friend, they welcome me."

### Folktale Skit: Welcoming Jesus. Welcome Others

Summarize a popular Christian folktale theme: Jesus appears to a couple and promises that he will visit them that evening. The couple prepares a beautiful feast, but gradually give it away to a ragged beggar, an orphaned child and a shivering woman. They do not see Jesus. The next day Jesus explains that he visited them as the beggar, the child and the woman.

Read aloud Matthew 10:40. Divide participants into small mixed-age groups. Ask each group to invent a contemporary skit about welcoming Jesus.

### Praying Together

- Option 1: Say, "Welcome, Jesus. We are blessed with your presence. Amen."
- Option 2: Sit in a circle. Pick up a Bible reverently and read aloud Matthew 10:40. Then hold hands. Turn to the person on your left and say, "Welcome, (name). Welcome, Jesus."  
Encourage group members to pass this prayer around the circle.
- Option 3: Invite participants to visualize a difficult situation in which they might be asked to give help. Then ask them to see themselves giving help for Jesus' sake. After several moments, offer a brief closing prayer. (You might pray aloud the Prayer of Saint Francis, which can be found on a coloring page further down in this document.)

## **Game: Welcome, Jesus!**

Stand in a circle with children. Teach these words to the tune of “London Bridge Is Falling Down”:

*Welcome, Jesus, to our church,*

*to our church, to our church.*

*Welcome, Jesus, to our church.*

*Welcome, Jesus!*

Hold hands and walk or skip in a circle as you sing the song one time. Then bow to the child/person on your left as you begin singing the song again. Next bow to the child/person on your right as you begin singing the song again. Repeat as many times as feels right.

## **Art: Finger People**

Ask children, “What kind of people can come to church to welcome Jesus?” Encourage many answers.

Distribute paper and felt pens or crayons. Ask each child to trace around his or her hand to make five-finger outlines. Children repeat this tracing several times, making a pleasing arrangement of shapes on the paper. Ask children to turn each finger shape into a picture of a person in the Church—a person who welcomes Jesus. Encourage children to make their pictures reflect the many different people who welcome Jesus.

## **Art: Welcome Banner**

Gather supplies you will need: Construction paper or fabric • Scissors • Glue, tape, or staples • Markers, crayons, or colored pencils • Extra decorations (stickers, glitter, etc.) • String, pipe cleaner, or ribbon

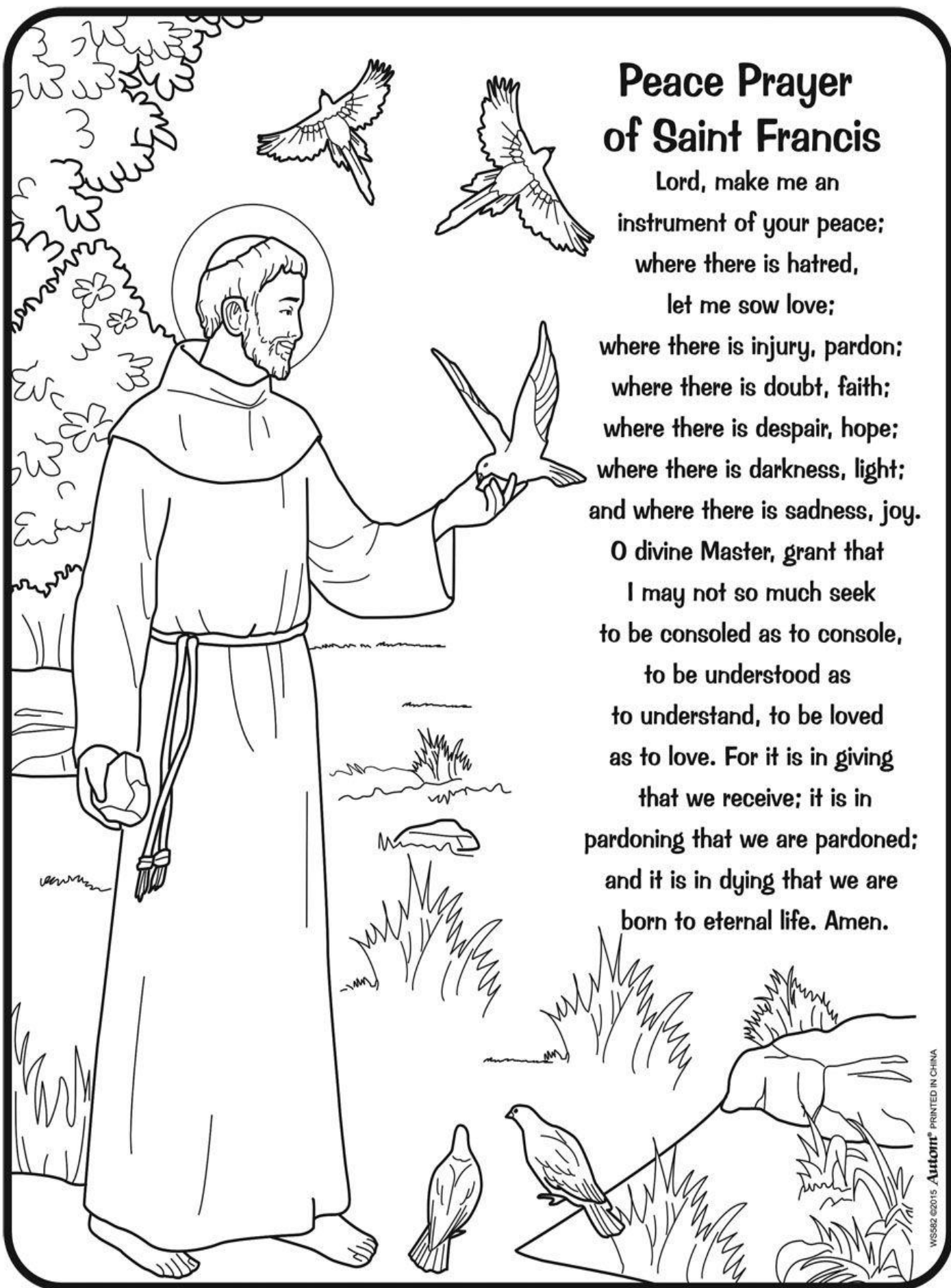
Procedure: 1. Choose several pieces of construction paper or cardstock. 2. Trace 4 hands onto the paper (stack several sheets for easier cutting). 3. Cut out hands, and attach together in a row or arc with tape, glue, or staples. 4. Decorate the hands by writing a letter or two on each hand, in order to spell out the word WELCOME. Decorate with stickers and/or other items if desired. 5. Attach ribbon or pipe cleaner for hanging.

## **Craft: Appreciation Cards**

Invite participants to make cards for people who make a big difference in their lives—friends, family members, teachers or others.

Directions to participants: ♦Fold a 5" x 7" index card in half (to make a 5" x 3½" folded greeting card). ♦Open the card. Use felt pens or colored pencils to draw a picture on the right-hand side. ♦The

picture should show a little thing making a big difference. For example, you could show someone handing a cup of cold water to a thirsty person. ◆Hold a pin on the center of the little thing you have drawn. Close the card, making a pinhole in the card front. ◆Cut a tiny opening around the pinhole. Gradually enlarge this opening to make a window that shows only the little thing in your picture, for example, the cup of water. ◆Invite participants to brainstorm appropriate words to add to the cards. For example, one could write, “You make a big difference to me” or “A little thing...makes a big difference.” Participants could also use words from Matthew 10:40-42 or personalized, individual notes. Encourage each person to give their cards to the people they have chosen.



## Peace Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an  
instrument of your peace;  
where there is hatred,  
let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.  
O divine Master, grant that  
I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as  
to understand, to be loved  
as to love. For it is in giving  
that we receive; it is in  
pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are  
born to eternal life. Amen.



I can follow Jesus by helping others.

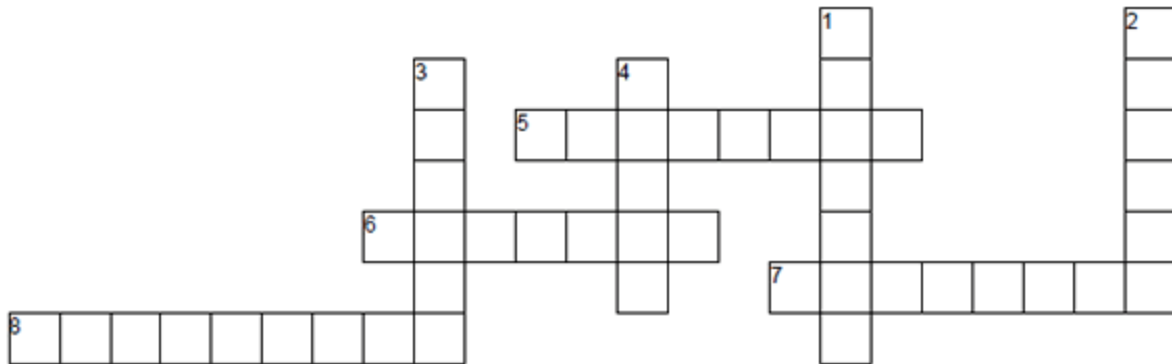
# The Rewards of Service

“Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”  
 Matthew 10:40-42 (NIV)



Complete the activity below.

Using the Across and Down clues, write the correct words in the numbered grid below.



## ACROSS

5. A person who speaks for God
6. Recognition of someone's good behavior
7. To gladly receive someone into your own house
8. A follower of Jesus

## DOWN

1. Small; not large
2. A fact that has been proven
3. An odorless, colorless, tasteless liquid; H<sub>2</sub>O
4. The opposite of hot; having a very low temperature

WELCOME	LITTLE	DISCIPLE	WATER
TRUTH	REWARD	PROPHET	COLD

# The Rewards of Service



"Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward." Matthew 10:40-42 (NIV)

Complete the activity.

*The words below have been written in code. Use the hints in the decoder at the top of the page to help break the code (the letters on top are the correct answers, the letters on the bottom are the code). Write the correct word on the line provided beside each code word.*

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

- 4-9-19-3-9-16-12-5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 18-5-3-5-9-22-5-19 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3-21-16 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7-9-22-5-19 \_\_\_\_\_
- 16-18-15-16-8-5-20 \_\_\_\_\_
- 12-9-20-20-12-5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3-15-12-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 18-5-23-1-18-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 20-18-21-20-8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 23-1-20-5-18 \_\_\_\_\_

TRUTH	DISCIPLE	WATER	RECEIVES	GIVES
CUP	PROPHET	LITTLE	REWARD	COLD