

Learning Together 4th After Pentecost Covid-19 – Rewards and Recognition

Have some paper, markers and stickers on hand and one or two sample notes on hand

Jesus was talking to his disciples. He was sending them on a mission to go out into neighbouring towns and tell the people in them about God's love and heal the sick. He told them to go without any money and to just rely on people's kindness and hospitality. If the people did not welcome them when they came, Jesus said to just go on to the next house or the next town and not to be mad or worry about it.

But the disciples *were* worried about it, so Jesus told them, "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." I wonder who you think Jesus meant by "the one who sent me"? Other stories in the Bible say it was God who sent Jesus, so maybe Jesus was talking about people welcoming other people as being a way of showing welcome to God. Maybe welcoming others was a way people showed they recognized the love of God in the people they welcomed in.

After that, Jesus talked about a reward for the people who would welcome the disciples, saying, "whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward." I wonder what reward he was talking about? It doesn't sound like he was talking about a reward of presents or money. Presents and money can always be lost.

I wonder what kind of rewards you can think of that a person might get for choosing to do the right or "righteous" thing, that could never be lost? Let's think about what the disciples were being sent to do – to heal people and to tell about God's love. Healing is something that can't be lost. Knowing something is hard to lose, too, especially knowing the feeling of comfort and love. Being thanked and recognized by the disciples for their hospitality would be another reward that couldn't be lost. What else might there be?

I wonder if you have ever received a reward for something good you have done that was a kind of reward that could never be lost? Or how about a reward that was small, like a sticker, that showed you the person who gave it to you was grateful or proud of you for what you did? It wasn't the sticker that was so important, but it was the feeling of knowing how happy the person who gave it to you was, because of what you did. The real reward was having the good thing you did recognized by the other person.

My challenge to you this week is to think about some people who have done something nice and make them a little reward to recognize that nice thing. It could be something nice they have done for you, or it could be something nice you saw them do for someone else or for the community. Think about people in your family, or your friends, or teachers, or neighbours.

Get some paper, some markers or crayons, and if you have any stickers around your house, especially reward stickers or gold stars, you can use those, too. (*Hold up materials to demonstrate*) If not, you can draw stars or other pictures. Make little notes

or cards and write down the nice thing you noticed them doing or something else nice about them. You can sign your name to let them know you made it, or you can just leave the notes unsigned, so they are anonymous, meaning the people don't know who made them. *(Hold up sample notes)* Then take those reward notes and deliver them to the people. If you want the notes to be anonymous, you might have to be sneaky, and deliver them when they are not looking!

Say this echo prayer with me:

Loving God...thank you for rewards...that can never be lost...and for people...who do nice things for others.... Help us to remember...to welcome others...and to look for God's love...inside other people...We pray in Jesus' name...Amen

