



## Reflecting on Our Relationships in Light of God's Love – Family & Friends

*Faith leads us to recreate our world and engage in revolutionary relationships with ourselves and with others. Revolutionary relationships are life-giving, risk-taking, vulnerable, gracious, forgiving, and diverse, and hold us accountable.\**  
- Rozella Haydée White

**Before we begin:** We are using this Advent season to examine and mend our relationships with our neighbors, our families, ourselves, and God. Advent, the season of preparing for a relationship with Christ, calls out for us to do this.

Today let's think about our relationships with family or close friends.

### Invocation

God, we know, because Jesus taught us, that you wish to have a close relationship with us. So close that we call you parent – family. Open our hearts here today to the love you wish to pour into us. Open our minds and our emotions so we can hear what you want us to learn.

### Confession

**God, you know us so well. You know that it is frequently our family members or closest friends who antagonize us the most. Sometimes it is family that is hardest to forgive. We truly wish to make progress toward the life-giving relationships you want us to have. Be patient with us, please. Teach us again and again what it looks like to forge the kinds of relationships that make you smile. Amen**

### Romans 15:5-7, 13

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (NRSV)

## **Prayer**

Leader: Parent God, give us the encouragement we need to find a way to live in harmony with one another.

**All: With one voice we glorify God!**

Leader: Brother Jesus, give us open hearts and a manageable pride, that we can find the way to cut through disagreements and embrace all who are our brothers and sisters in you.

**All: With one voice we glorify God!**

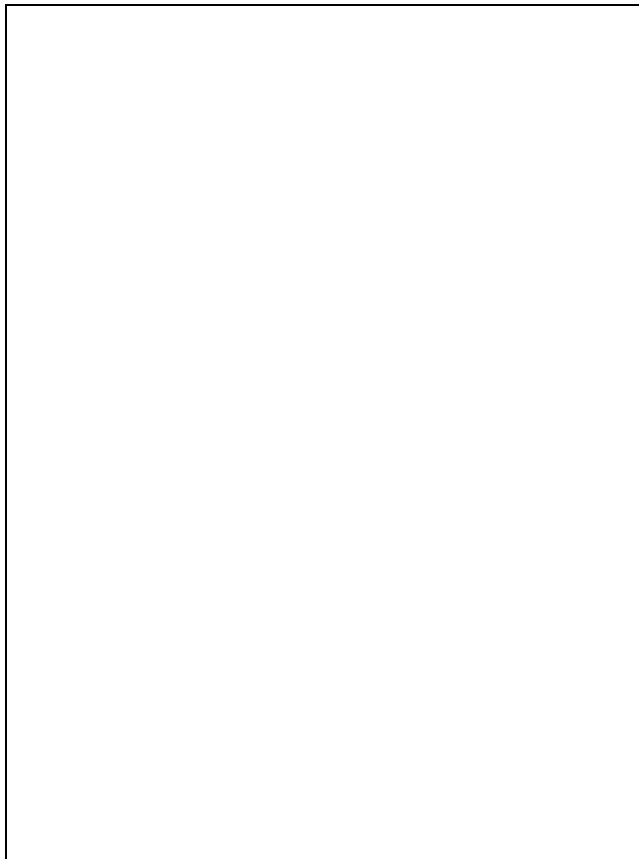
Leader: Sister Spirit, grant us hope, joy, and peace so we can share them with all of the family of God!

**All: With one voice we glorify God! Amen**

## **A time of silence**

You are invited into a time of silence. Take a deep breath and exhale slowly. Listen for God.

This week we are writing about our relationships with family or close friends as our spiritual practice. We are reflecting on our relationships in light of God's love. Look at the collage of faces. Find a face that makes you think about a family member or close friend. Sit quietly as you think about that person. How is that relationship? How would you like it to be? Pray for that person. Now write a short note (like a postcard or a tweet) to that person.



## **A blessing**

May we love God, our neighbors, and ourselves  
with all the creativity of our minds,  
the strength of our hearts,  
the power of our bodies,  
and the resilience of the Spirit. Amen

## **Sending: An invitation to go deeper**

Jesus came as a stranger to the world and he invited us to rethink who is family. Mary and Martha and Lazarus became like family to him.

The phrase "voluntary kin" is used to describe those in our lives who are not blood relatives but we treat as family.

Who are my voluntary kin? Who am I being invited to bring into my family of choice – my "family"?

**LEAD**   
Advent 2019 Week 2

\*Excerpted from Love Big: The Power of Revolutionary Relationships to Heal the World, Fortress Press, 2019. Used with permission.