



THE FIRST CHURCH

NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Acting on Today's Childrens Story
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Sunday September 13, 2020

Families and Children of All Ages

- 1) Create a Sacred Space. [Follow my Directions here.](#)
- 2) Did you [worship](#) with us live or did you watch our recording?
- 3) Message:

We're all experiencing changes and breaks in our routine we do not expect. Some of us are in new classrooms and offices and we need to get used to how our new daily routine works. Some of us are at home. Many of us are experiencing daily and even minute to minute breaks from what is usual and expected. How do you respond? How does God want us to respond?

This September morning is delightful, beautiful, fresh, breezy and sunny. I woke up in my cozy bed with my favorite pillow and Luna the cat sleeping on my right hand. Luna loves to be scratched and will even walk back and forth on my hand to make sure I get all the right spots. She purrs.

Sometimes Luna crawls up onto my chest with gentleness and I can barely feel her. Once in a while Luna walks across me putting all her weight in one tiny paw-point. Ouch! This hurts! Sometimes I think Luna does not know how much tiny paw-points hurt me. Sometimes I think she's trying to ruin my sleep for sport or wants me to wake up and feed her when she repeatedly steps on me at dawn or in the middle of the night.

Luna is our beautiful gray and white cat. She looks like she has half a milk-mustache. She comes when she's called and spends her days on my pillow or in a window. She's soothing, calming and cuddly, -until she steps on me with her little cat feet which feel like poking-sticks pushing on one painful point on an arm or leg.

When I'm calm and content and happy I give Luna a gentle nudge to keep moving when she steps on me. When I'm tired and cranky I've pushed her along

and even yelled at her in frustration and pain. Sometimes I'm even tempted to make a "Lunar-Launch" causing her to fly off of the bed.

How can I make an In-Spirit or inspired, God-with-me response? What do I do when Luna makes me mad? What do you do when people, pets or family hurt you by accident or on purpose? What helps?

I pray. This is always my best option. When I feel like the center of a dark angry thunder-cloud and lightning might shoot out of my eyes I know it will be best if I pray: *Father God, help me to breath you in with my deep breaths, guide me back to my heart beat. May my feet be like the deep roots of a tree. May my arms reach up and out to the big sky. I am a tree rooted and centered in you. May I bring peace. May I forgive. May I be forgiven. May it be so.*

Praying is always the best choice in my experience. God even understands our angry prayers asking why or how bad things happen with our pets, family members or people we don't know. We are often the most frustrated with ourselves. Forgive. Forgive yourself and others. God's grace is enough. If you can't forgive yourself or others, ask God for help. God says, *"I am the LORD your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you. Do not fear; I will help you"* Isaiah 41:13. I imagine squeezing my right hand and Jesus squeezing back in love and reassurance. Jesus tells us to forgive, *"Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times."* Matthew 18:22.

Think about all the things you forgive. This might be a sibling taking a toy or your crayons and paper. It might be understanding that your dad ate the last apple and there are no more or that your aunt needs your mom's time too. My brother forgave me once for cutting into his finger with the nail clippers when we were small. I didn't hurt him on purpose but he was indeed hurt and bleeding.

Families can think about asking for forgiveness and offering forgiveness this week. Place a mason jar, rinsed out pickle jar or a bowl in a spot you can see it. Pick an item like a penny, shell tooth-picks or pebbles to count the times you offer forgiveness. Pick another item to represent the times you ask for forgiveness. Keep track by yourself or as a family each day before bed for three nights. Write down your experiences. What do you discover?

What makes you feel the best forgiving or being forgiven? Does it help you when you pray? How do you feel when you can't forgive? What helps you? What makes it harder? How does God show up?

Alternative Idea:

1. Make a skit with your stuffed animals about learning to forgive and asking for forgiveness. Each can play the part of being the one who forgives and the one needing forgiveness. One can play the part of Jesus. Put on the skit for your friends or family in person or use Zoom.