

## Resources on the Sunday Readings – Easter 6

Picture Reflection (p1), Bible Reading & Study Questions (p2)

See separate families' sheet.

### Picture Reflection



#### Friends

John 15: 9-17 - Easter 6

*Jesus encourages the disciples to keep his commandments and, above all, to love one another as he loved them. He says that those who do this are his friends and he says that this is his choice rather than theirs.*

- Take a few moments to look at this picture.... what does it say to you?
- How would you describe a good friendship?
- What particular qualities do we value in our friends?
- Reflect on how 'friends on Facebook' differ from those in the ordinary world....
- How does our friendship with Jesus differ from other friendships in our lives?
- Reflect on ways that we can all improve our friendship with Jesus and with people in our church family....

# Bible Study Questions.

Bible Reading – **John 15:9-17 - Love One Another - Good News Bible**

<sup>9</sup> I love you just as the Father loves me; remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

<sup>11</sup> "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. <sup>12</sup> My commandment is this: love one another, just as I love you. <sup>13</sup> The greatest love you can have for your friends is to give your life for them. <sup>14</sup> And you are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> I do not call you servants any longer, because servants do not know what their master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because I have told you everything I heard from my Father. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures. And so the Father will give you whatever you ask of him in my name. <sup>17</sup> This, then, is what I command you: love one another.

1. Jesus is offering the gift of friendship. But this is not the naturally occurring friendship that people choose for themselves or that 'just happens' among those who share similar interests; rather it is a gracious gift. However, Jesus' surprising friends are his 'chosen people' (v.16). How do you feel knowing that you have been chosen to be a friend of Jesus?
2. The friends of Jesus are fundamentally loved, as he is loved (v.9). It is this love, with its associated joy (v.11), that holds them together – a gift to be cherished rather than a prize to be pursued. Does this change our way of thinking about our own friends?
3. Jesus also talks about that friendship being conditional on following his commandments (v14), which reflects the Law of Moses. However, John reinterprets this, in the light of Jesus, to say that keeping God's commandments is never intended as a way of procuring divine favour; rather that Life shaped by Law is the response of love to greater Love. What might be the rules of your friendships? Are they different to this Love that is offered?
4. We have been appointed to go and 'bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures' (v16) What fruit do you see being produced in your life?
5. Jesus' final command is that we should 'love one another' (v17). When are the times that you find this difficult to do?