



Discussion and Activities for Churches and Families

by *The Rev. Lauren Villemuer-Drenth*

Using the book:

The Very Best Day: The Way of Love for Children

by *Roger Hutchison*

For information on the Way of Love or to connect to an adult-focused study or to watch videos, please visit [The Episcopal Church: Way of Love](https://www.episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove).

If you would like to do this as a parish, start with a reading on Zoom or another online meeting platform. Send out the link ahead of time and have the children and their families join in with their copy of the book. **The Very Best Day** <https://www.churchpublishing.org/verybestday> is available for purchase online, in paperback or in ebook format from Apple, Amazon, and the Google Play store. Bulk pricing is available through www.churchpublishing.org. After the first read of the book, ask the following questions:

- Which way is your favorite?
- Which way is the most important?
- Could any of these ways could be left out?
- Which way would you add?
- What could the Way of Love mean?

Here are questions and activities for each of the seven ways. If you are exploring this as a parish, you might schedule a conversation focused on one way each week paired with an activity that can be shared online. If you are doing this as a family, you might try one way every few days.

Turn: Reread the pages of the book that focus on “Turn”. Inspired by the book, answer: “What ways do you grow when you turn towards Jesus’ love?” Then try one or more of these activities:

1. Turning towards Jesus is a promise we make in baptism, and every time anyone in our church is baptized, we renew that promise. Share a story of a loved one’s baptism, show photos of a family baptism, find something in your home that reminds you of baptism.
2. Think of a mistake or wrong choice you made. How did you turn back to love (God’s way) to make it right?
3. Play a game called, “Turn”. Every time someone uses a directional word (down, up, right, left, etc.) throughout the day, say, “Turn to God’s love!” How many times did you turn today?

Learn: Reread the pages on “Learn”. Inspired by the book, answer: “How can you learn more about Jesus and his love?” Then try one or more of these activities:

1. What is your favorite Bible story? Share it with someone else: Illustrate it, act it out, or make a puppet show to share it.
2. Read a story about Jesus. What part of the story did you like best? What would you say to Jesus if you were there?
3. We also learn about following Jesus through the lives of others. Learn about and share a story of a saint or tell a story about someone you know whose life shows us what the Way of Love can look like.

Pray: Reread the pages on “Pray.” Inspired by the book, answer: “When do you pray? What do you say when you talk to God?” What is prayer for you? Then try one or more of these activities:

1. Create a prayer corner, a table, or even a tray to provide a space for being with God. Find or make a cross for it. Add a candle, something from nature, a Bible or prayer book.
2. Write down or draw your prayers whenever you think of something or someone and place them in a bowl or basket. Once a day, pray the contents of the bowl. Once a week, as a family, pray all the requests. Then empty the bowl and start again.
3. Did you know a hymn is a prayer? Which is your favorite song about God? Sing a hymn together, or make up your own prayer song.

Worship: Reread the pages on “Worship” Inspired by the book, answer the questions: “What is your favorite part of worship? Why?” What is worship for you? Then try one or more of these activities:

1. Join your faith community online for worship if this is being offered, or worship virtually with another church nearby or far away. You could “visit” the National Cathedral for a service. (<https://cathedral.org/online/>)
2. Choose one of the Daily Offices from The Book of Common Prayer for worship at home today. (<https://www.bcponline.org/DailyOffice/dailyoff.html>)
3. Create a family worship service using a favorite Bible story. Look for or make up songs and prayers to go with the story.

Bless: Reread the pages on “Bless.” Inspired by the book, reflect on “You are a blessing. Can you name the ways?” Then try one or more of these activities:

1. Make a list, or draw a picture to show the ways you bless others. This week, at the end of each day, add to the list or picture the ways others have blessed you.
2. Think of someone who means a lot to you at church. Is it a teacher? A smiling usher? Someone who sits in the pew next to you? One of the clergy or lay leaders? Make them a card or write a letter telling them how they have blessed you and mail it to them.
3. One of the ways we bless others is by being a good listener. Call someone special and ask them how they’re doing, or ask them to tell you about a blessing they’ve received.

Go: Reread the pages on “Go.” Inspired by the book, answer: “What does ‘Go in peace to love and serve the Lord’ mean to you?” Then try one or more of these activities:

1. Can you think of a way to serve others from home? Doing Good Together has some great suggestions (<https://www.doinggoodtogether.org/covid19-response>). Try one!
2. Bake or make a snack for a neighbor. Doing something for someone who does not have family close by is especially thoughtful. Make a card to go with it. Then deliver it to their door.
3. Decorate your driveway or sidewalk with colorful chalk pictures and encouraging messages. Be sure to write a big “Thank you!” to delivery people and other workers who pass by.

Rest: Reread the pages on “Rest.” Inspired by the book, answer: “What do you do to slow down and rest?” Then try one or more of these activities:

1. Can you find a way to rest for 1 hour or longer that does not include technology or electronic games? Do it!
2. We rest so we can take care of our minds, bodies, emotions, and spirit. Spend some time sitting outside or take a walk, and focus on nature and the beauty around you.
3. Pretend you are “camping” in the living room. Settle down in your “tent” and share a story inspired by nature around your imaginary campfire.

Once you have finished exploring all the Ways of Love, reread the whole book and ask the questions at the beginning again. Which was the hardest way to do? Which was the easiest? Which way surprised you? Which way do you want to practice regularly? Make a list of activities you haven’t tried to explore one or more of the seven ways during the next month.

The Reverend Lauren A. Villemuer-Drenth is currently Director of Children's Ministries at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Winston-Salem, NC. After her ordination in 2005, she worked with several parishes, dioceses, and schools in multiple states to develop children, youth and family ministries.

Roger Hutchison is the Director of Christian Formation and Parish Life at Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church in Houston. An artist who paints with children and adults in a variety of contexts, he is the author of several books including *Jesus: God Among Us* and *The Painting Table*. Roger serves as the chair of the Forma Council and is a member of the National Association of Grieving Children and the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. He lives with his family outside of Houston, Texas.