

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE



HUMAN RELATIONS DAY



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church®



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LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN LUKE 16:19-31

- Create a comfortable space with throw pillows around a purple cloth that is set with overflowing bowls of grapes and other items to offer a feeling of opulence.
- Arrange for several high school students or young adults to sit around the “table” during the Gospel reading from Luke 16:19-31.
- Following the reading, invite the children forward while the youth chat and pretend to enjoy the meal.
- Ask the youth if the children may join them.
- The youth vocally proclaim that there is no room for the children.

INSTEAD, SIT NEARBY IN A CIRCLE ON THE FLOOR WITH THE CHILDREN AND TELL THEM THE STORY OF LAZARUS:

Some religious leaders grumble that Jesus hangs out with people who aren't as “good” as they are. Jesus responds by telling the story we just heard about Lazarus.

Lazarus is poor and sick and sits outside the gates of a rich man every day. The rich man sits at a fine table (glance over at the youth) and eats as much food as he possibly can, all the time. Poor Lazarus would be happy, even with some of the grapes that accidentally fall on the floor.

(Look at the youth again.)

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In this story, the rich man dies. He is very uncomfortable because he did not live a life that honored other people. Even though Lazarus was not been treated well when he was alive, he had tried to please God. The rich man sees that when Lazarus died, angels carried him to a place where he was comfortable.

Abraham tries to explain to the rich man that we need to take care of everyone, not just those we know and like. When we don't share with people who have less than us, it can hurt our relationship with God. When we are not kind to people who are different from us, we miss out on what that person has to offer us.

(At this point, the youth come to the circle where the children are and hand out grapes for the children to share.)

19 “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. [a] The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side.[b] 24 He called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.’ 25 But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in

like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.’ 27 He said, ‘Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house— 28 for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.’ 29 Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ 30 He said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ 31 He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

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I think Jesus tells this story to help us understand that it's important to be kind to everyone. It's important not to be greedy when we know other people don't have enough. Some of the ways that we as a church share are through our food pantry and our Christmas project (*name mission programs in your church*).

TODAY WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO THAT WITH OUR HUMAN RELATIONS DAY OFFERING.

(Hold up envelope).



Our church, as well as other United Methodist churches, will share some of what we have to help communities organize for better opportunities in places where people are suffering or don't have enough resources.

This week, I invite you to look for people like Lazarus who might be lonely or ignored and think of a way to be friendly to that person. And if you feel lonely or ignored, remember that here, in this place, you are loved and known.

LET'S HOLD HANDS AND PRAY:

Dear God, thank you for these children and their spirit of generosity. Show us how we can share our time, our gifts and our friendship with other people. Help us to be more like Jesus. Amen.