**Worship for Sunday** (for family worship: [**www.rootsontheweb.com/familiesathome24may**](http://www.rootsontheweb.com/familiesathome24may))

**Pause in God’s Presence:**

*Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds—his name is the Lord—be exultant before him. (Psalm 68)*

As I come before you God help me to praise your name. Focus my mind on your presence with me and remind me that I am joined together with people around the world worshipping at home. May your name be glorified in our worship. Amen.

*Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name – the name that you gave me- so that they may be one as we are one. (John 17 v11).*

As I come into your presence, I rest in your name, I take refuge in your protection. Show me your ways, let peace surround me that I may know of your guidance and your safety. Amen

**God’s word:** Read one or more of these passages and allow time and space for God to speak though his word: Acts 1:6-14, Psalm 68:1-10 & 32-35, 1Peter 4:12-14 & 5:6-11, John 17:1-11

**Explore God’s Word:**

*John 17 v1-11*

I enter into a privileged moment, as Jesus speaks directly to his Father. I am standing on holy ground as I listen to the prayer of Jesus. I read his words slowly and with reverence, not trying to understand them, but allowing them to enter into my heart.

I notice that Jesus is praying for those who belong to him. He is praying for me! He asks the Father to protect me. I can trust that the prayer of Jesus for me will be answered. I can rely on this prayer at every moment in my life. I am surrounded by the protection that Jesus has prayed for. I sit quietly with this awareness.

**Read and think: Either read the story below or listen to it here:** [**https://youtu.be/2UxFodeiIv8**](https://youtu.be/2UxFodeiIv8)

**Safe**

Jenny always held her mother’s hand when she was crossing the road, even when the ‘green man’ was showing that traffic had stopped. Her mother insisted, “Hold my hand, poppet. It’s a busy road. Come now! Take my hand. Then you’ll be safe.” Well, it’s what grown- ups do, isn’t it? So, for every busy road, and even for the quieter ones near her house, it was the same. “Hold my hand, Jenny. There’s a road to cross.” So Jenny dutifully held her mother’s hand when she was crossing the road.

It almost went disastrously wrong on the crossing outside the supermarket. Jenny had been helping her mum with the shopping – something she always enjoyed. And so a careful mother, with a full shopping bag in one hand and the other hand available for a dutiful child to hold onto, stood at the crossing waiting for the lights to change so that she and Jenny could pop into the newsagents on the way home. Jenny had a ball in her other hand. Nothing unusual about that, as Jenny and her favourite ball were largely inseparable. And so you had to hold your mother’s hand and grip your ball tightly as you crossed the road.

The lights changed. The traffic stopped. The ‘bleeper’ on the crossing sounded and the ‘red man’ changed to green. And Jenny and her mum set off to cross the road. And that’s when Jenny dropped her ball. In an instant, the ball was out of her fingers and was running under the wheels of a stationary car. Jenny’s precious ball …. And in a split second, Jenny had let go of her mother’s hand and was off after the ball. “Jenny!” her mother screamed, and turned to catch her daughter.

Just at that moment, a cyclist came careering down the road. Assuming there was no one on the crossing, and unable to see the developing crisis, the cyclist jumped the lights, saw Jenny, braked suddenly to avoid hitting her, swerved violently, and ran straight over the bag of shopping that Jenny’s mum had dropped in the middle of the crossing in her attempt to rescue her child.

Thankfully, no one was hurt. The cyclist just managed to stay upright. Jenny was whisked across the road by a scared and relieved mother. And there were broken eggs, squashed tomatoes, slices of bread, and the remains of a day’s shopping scattered all over the street. As angry pedestrians and drivers alike remonstrated with the shaking cyclist, an angry mother remonstrated with a bewildered Jenny. “I told you that you always have to hold my hand. You’re more important than a silly ball. It’s too dangerous to cross over by yourself. You have to hold my hand, right?” Jenny nodded through her tears. A lesson had been learned. Holding your mother’s hand would always keep you safe.

When Granny Robertson from next door invited Jenny to come to the shops with her – with Jenny’s mother’s approval, of course – Jenny told Granny Robertson the whole story of the crossing and the cyclist – including how she’d rescued her precious ball at the end of it all which was, of course, very important. “I have to hold your hand when I’m crossing the road, Mrs Robertson,” she insisted on their way to the shops, “because that way I’ll always be safe.

Granny Robertson just said “Oh,” as the conversation went on to other things. That is, until they were approaching the crossing in front of the supermarket, and Granny Robertson insisted, “Now, young Jenny. Here we are, about to cross the road. You want to be safe from danger? Then, come, and I’ll hold your hand while we cross.” Jenny paused. It sounded the same as her mum had said, but … then …. It was kind of different. Dutifully, Jenny held out her hand to take hold of Granny Robertson’s, just as she did with her mum. But as their fingers touched, before Jenny could grip on to Granny’s Robertson’s hand, the old lady took Jenny’s hand firmly in hers. Now, not only didn’t it sound right, but it didn’t feel right either.

“But …. “ Jenny began.

“What’s the matter?” Granny Robertson enquired, the flicker of a smile appearing on her face.

“But….” Jenny stammered on, “when we cross the road, I hold on to my mum’s hand. She doesn’t hold on to mine.”

“Ah. I know that. But you see, if you hold on to mine, no matter how hard you try and grip tight, you’ll always be distracted, and your attention will wander…..”

“Like dropping my ball, you mean.”

“Exactly. Like dropping your ball. And you’ll let go, and then you’ll be in danger ….”

“From cyclists …..”

“From cyclists, and cars, and much more besides. But, you see, when I hold on to your hand, I’ll not let go. Because my hand is bigger than yours. No matter how much you get distracted and chase after silly balls, I’ll hold on tight. Because that’s my job, you see. And if I hold your hand, you’ll be safer than ever.”

Sure enough, Jenny felt very secure indeed as Granny Robertson held her hand tightly as they crossed the road. Even though there was no ball to drop to test its effectiveness, Jenny felt very safe indeed.

The next time Jenny and her mum stopped at the crossing in front of the supermarket, Jenny’s mum said, “Now, hold my hand while we cross the road, so that you’ll be safe.”

“Don’t want to,” Jenny replied. But before her mother had time to scold her for her cheekiness, Jenny concluded, “Because I want you to hold my hand, because Granny Robertson says that way I’ll be safer than ever.”

**Safe**

A hand held out for me to hold;

A hand stretched forth; and now I’m told

To reach and grasp, to touch and know

This hand that’s offered now.

A hand held out with tender touch;

A hand to heal; that offers much

To comfort me; new strength to show …..

This hand is offered now

A hand held out; a sign of grace;

A hand that offers love’s embrace;

To draw me close; hope’s hold to find ….

This hand still offered now.

A hand held out, admonishing;

A hand to warn; an offering

Of learning’s growth for soul and mind …

This hand yet offered now.

A hand held out – this hand I seek;

A hand stretched out when I am weak;

That lifts me up when I would fall …

This hand I’m offered now.

A hand that’s yours; a hand that’s mine;

A hand that’s human, and divine;

That brings what’s needed, giving all ….

This hand … look …. Offered now.

**Once you have listened to or read the story & reflection, what is your reaction? Note how the story makes you feel. Be aware of how God takes your hand and promises to protect you. Spend time in this thought and speak to him about it.**

**Prayers**

God our protector,

We come before you in prayer for your world, your children and ourselves.

We pray for the world that you have made. We thank you for the renewal of creation springing up as human activity has been restricted. We pray that we will learn to value these gifts and to live more gently in the future.

We pray for the leaders of nations making impossible decisions on our behalf. We pray that they will speak and act with integrity and protect those who are most vulnerable.

We pray for our church communities. We bring you our sadness at not being able to meet together and we thank you for the people finding it easier to explore faith at this time. We pray that we will find new ways to reach out to the world.

We pray for the people we miss. Our friends and families and those we long to see face to face. We pray for safety and protection for our loved ones.

We pray for those who have lost someone they love and haven’t been able to say goodbye. We pray that they will know the comfort of your loving presence and that you will show us how to reach out in love and friendship.

We pray for ourselves in these difficult days shared by so many people but also lived in isolation. Help us to know your protecting love and to live in the power of your Spirit.

In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father ……

**Listen & Sing:**

Raise a Hallelujah - Bethel Music <https://youtu.be/G2XtRuPfaAU>

For God So Loved The World- Hillsong <https://youtu.be/3M_kGWB8mNk>

And Can It Be <https://youtu.be/Tu2uA6U4Fxg>

Blessed Assurance- Jeremy Riddle <https://youtu.be/7SSJicZO6_g>

**Blessing:**

**A prayer of blessing**

Holy God,

be with me as I leave this time of worship.

May I know your presence in my every day and live your message of love and hope.

Amen