

A NOTE TO PARENTS

The message of the last week of Easter season is hard to present as “good news.” Jesus had returned to his friends, gladdening their hearts and giving them hope that they would never again be left on their own to puzzle out God’s ways with them ... they have been able to touch him, talk with him, know his loving presence ... now, they feel sure, the moment has come for God to get moving and bring in the Kingdom—nothing can stop it this time!—when, suddenly, here is Jesus leaving them again, this time for keeps. Why couldn’t he just have stayed around and taken care of them? They were happy to follow him, listen to him, do what he asked them ... but to start doing it all themselves, with only his “Spirit” to guide them ... that’s not good news.

Kids are eager to grow up—and they are scared to death of growing up. Children want to do things for themselves—and they want you to do everything for them. And even when the eagerness is at its height, there is fear and trembling as the moment arrives: to walk alone to school for the first time, to sleep over at a friend’s house, to act a part in a play, to ride that two-wheeled bicycle without training wheels, to do the right thing even though no grownups are looking. But over and over again we learn that that is God’s way. He makes himself present to us just long enough, and powerfully enough, to assure that we will fall hopelessly in love with him ... and then he withdraws. Not utterly, but far enough so that we must draw our strength not from his felt presence with us but from the newly empowered self he is working to give us: his Spirit dwelling not “with” us but “in” us.

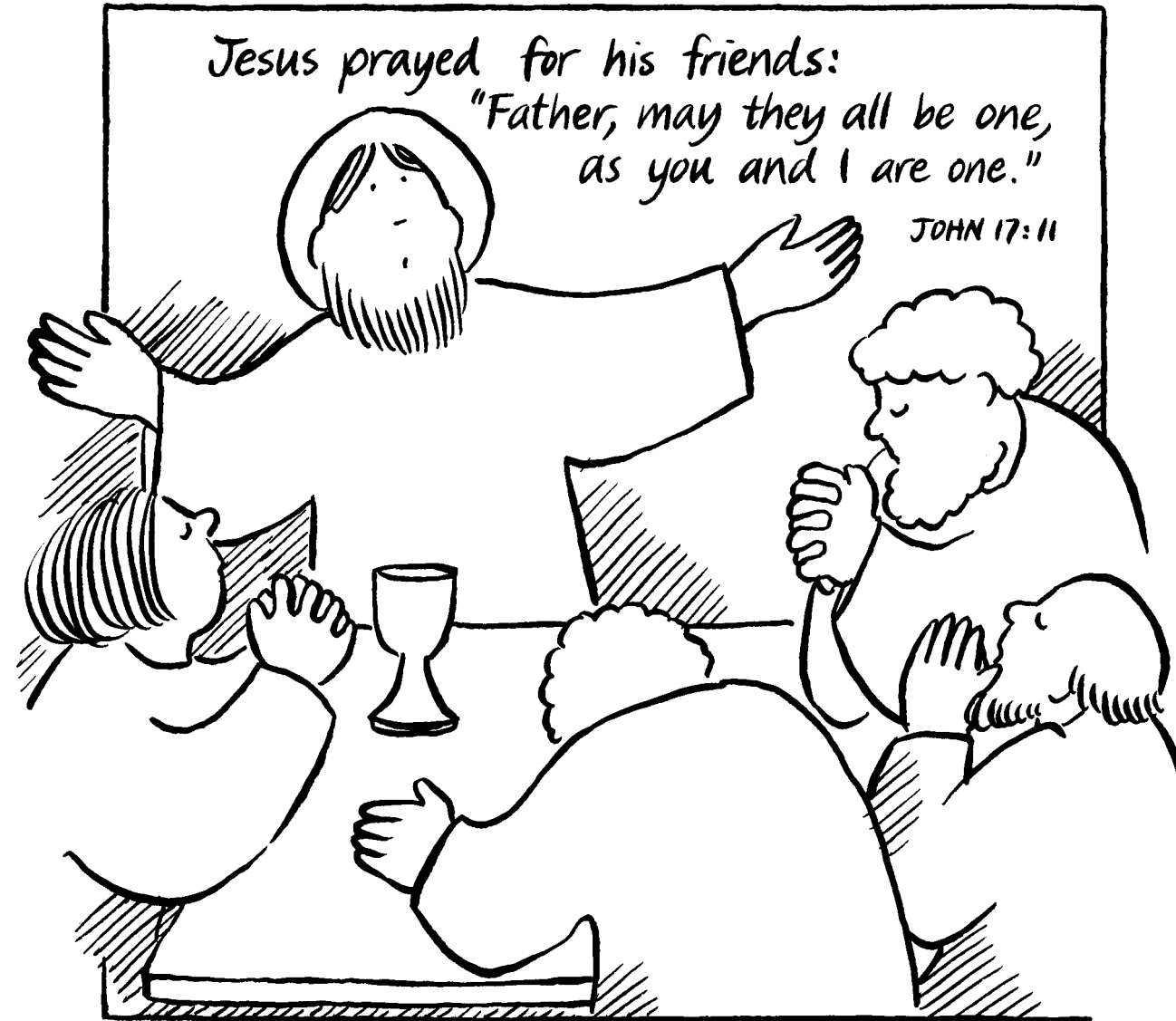
Where has Jesus gone? Home to God. He has left us, “to prepare a place for us.” We are to grow up, from being God’s dependent children to being citizens of his commonwealth—free, mature, adult persons. The unpromising youngest son in the fairy tale grows up to marry the princess and inherit the kingdom. In the vision of the Kingdom that ends the Bible, God is no longer our Father; he is our Spouse—we have come of age and taken our places as pillars of his temple. And that is good news.

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Year B
7th SUNDAY
of EASTER



Jesus came from God. He loved God so much that he called God his "Father."



Now Jesus was going away, to die on the cross, rise again, and then go to his Father.



He prayed, "Father, I am sending out my chosen friends to do my work."



"Use my love and new life to make them holy."

For a few weeks after he rose from the dead, Jesus was with his friends. Then, he ASCENDED to heaven to be with God. "ASCENDED" means "went up." Now he was with his friends in a new way. He was with them all the time, like God. He is with us all the time, too. His SPIRIT is alive in our hearts, and makes us HOLY.

We say God's Spirit is like a dove, and like a wind, and like a flame. But the Spirit is like other things, too. Draw your idea of God's Spirit.

COME
HOLY SPIRIT
COME