



The Way to My Father's House

John 14:1-14

Welcome to 'Together, Apart', free intergenerational resources to help us be church together while we're keeping each other safe.

All the sections explore the same Bible passage in a range of creative ways. Choose whichever parts work best for you. You can print whichever pages of the PDF you need.

You can find lots more free resources like this at www.reflectionary.org

Here is what you will find in each week's post:



A Word in Your Ear

A Bible passage that we can all learn from together, whatever our age.



Food for Thought

Aimed at adults and teens, some thoughts and questions on the passage.



Inner Space

A blank space for you to record your thoughts.



Looking Closer

A creative and interactive look at the Bible passage. Great for older children and anyone who likes a creative approach.



I Wonder...

An imaginative style of Bible study, perfect for younger children and those who like to immerse themselves in the Bible world.



Take a Break

A chill-out zone, with meditative colouring for adults and children, and links to audio recordings of the passage so that you can listen while resting your eyes.



Creation Station

A craft for children (or young-at-heart adults!)



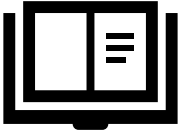
Outside In

Suggestions for activities throughout the week that link with the Bible passage.



High 5

Suggestions for spending time with God.



A Word in Your Ear

Take your time reading this passage from The Bible. Ask God to help you hear. You can decorate the space around the words if you like.

John 14:1-7

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.

My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

(NIV)



Food for Thought

I love Thomas. He's often known as 'doubting' Thomas, but I think a better name is '*mentioning the elephant in the room*' Thomas. He has a knack for saying what everyone else is thinking, and this passage is a great example.

Jesus' words are, let us say, enigmatic. We view them with the benefit of a couple of thousand years of hindsight, and countless sermons and Bible studies. But for the first disciples, (and if I'm honest, for me) they're puzzling.

'My Father's house has many rooms' – whatever does that mean? 'I am going there to prepare a place for you' – where, exactly? Back to Nazareth to see your mum? Is Jesus inviting his disciples to stay at his place for the weekend?

Q: What do you think Jesus was talking about? What did first disciples think he meant? If you had been there, what would you have asked?

With 'my Father's house', Jesus was using the Old Testament metaphor for the place where God's presence is known, famously in Psalm 23:6. (It's something like the New Testament phrase 'The Kingdom of God'.) Check out Genesis 28:17, 1 Samuel 1:24, 2 Samuel 7:5-6, Ezra 2:68, Psalm 27:4, Psalm 84:10, Ecclesiastes 5:1, Ezekiel 10:19, Hosea 8:1.

Q: What do we learn about God's house from these verses? What can that phrase refer to?

Originally, we lived with God and he with us, but with sin came separation and as Adam and Eve were symbolically banished from Eden, so God's world and ours drifted apart. Only in the tabernacle or temple, 'The House of God', would these worlds touch.

Not that God lived in that one place, but the temple was where humans could meet with God. Yet even that was at a safe distance, behind the curtain that shielded the Holy of Holies, the curtain that was torn in two from top to bottom when Jesus gave his life.

"Destroy this temple", Jesus announced as he looked at the stone building, "and I will raise it again in three days!" (John 2:19) He himself was now the temple, the tabernacle, the place of God dwelling with his people. (John 1:14)

Q: Look back to John 4:19-26. What did Jesus say about the place to worship God? What does that have to do with the temple curtain and Jesus describing himself as the temple?

With his 'going away', (a metaphor for death), and 'coming back', Jesus reinstated God's world in our world. Rather than being a place in heaven for humans to live after we die, God's house is here, right now! John 1:14 tells us that "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The word 'dwelt' literally means to pitch your tent or to move into the neighbourhood. God's house is here. The same word is used again in Revelation 21:3, where God declares that he will dwell always with his people.

Q: What does it mean for God to dwell with us right now?



Inner Space

What's going round your head? Here is a space for you to put your thoughts on paper. You can write, draw ... whatever you like. What will you put here?



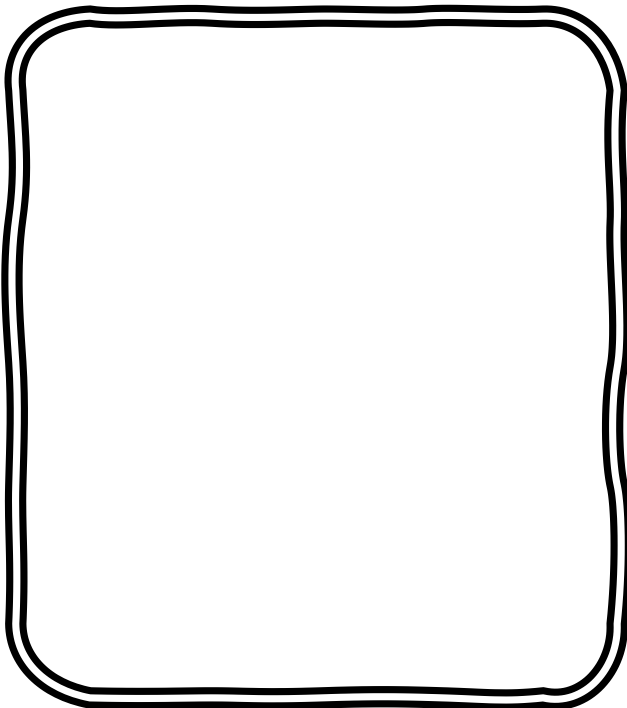
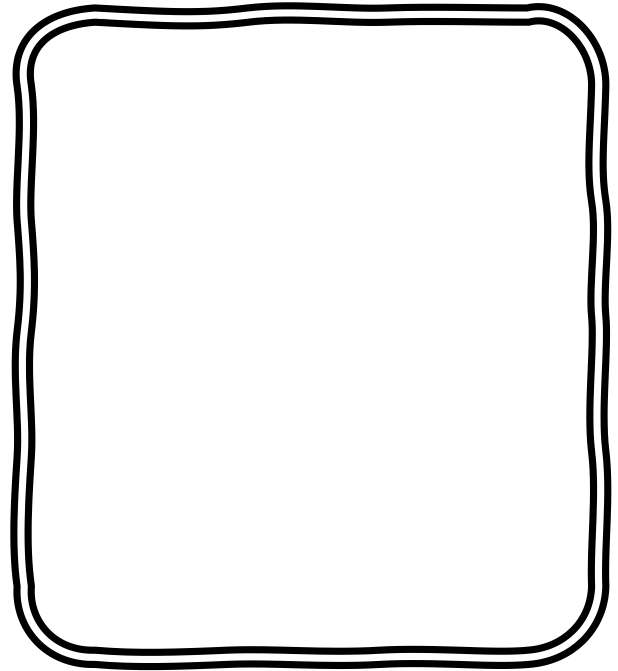
Looking Closer

"In my Father's house, there are many rooms, and I am going to prepare a place for you."

The disciples were worried and upset because Jesus had been talking about going away. So Jesus takes the time to comfort them.

He reassures them that it will be OK, and tells them about his Father's house and its many rooms. Jesus says that he himself will prepare rooms for his friends.

What do you think Jesus meant by his Father's house having many rooms? Can you draw or describe it here?



Thomas was a bit confused. When Jesus said he was going to prepare a place for them, Thomas wasn't sure what he meant.

I expect all the rest of the disciples weren't sure as well, but Thomas was the brave one who asked the question. Well done, Thomas!

Some people think that those who admit they don't know something are dim. But that's not true, it's a good thing to ask, because that way you find out, and then you know. (And you help all the people who wanted to know but were not brave enough to ask!)

What questions would you ask, if you were brave, like Thomas?

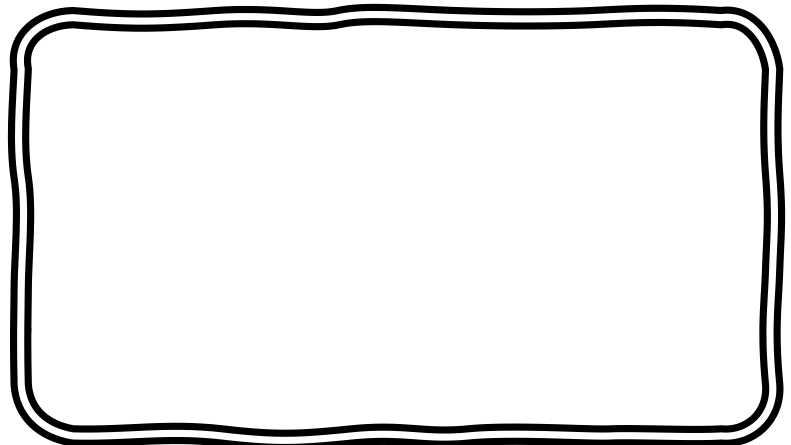
Jesus answered Thomas' question with a very famous saying: "*I am the Way and the Truth and the Life.*"

What do you think that means?

What does it mean for you, today?

Perhaps you could learn that verse by heart.

You'll find it in John 14:6.





I Wonder...

Jesus talked about God's house with many rooms, and he said that he would prepare a place there for his followers. Jesus said that he is the way and the truth and the life.

I wonder what is your favourite part.

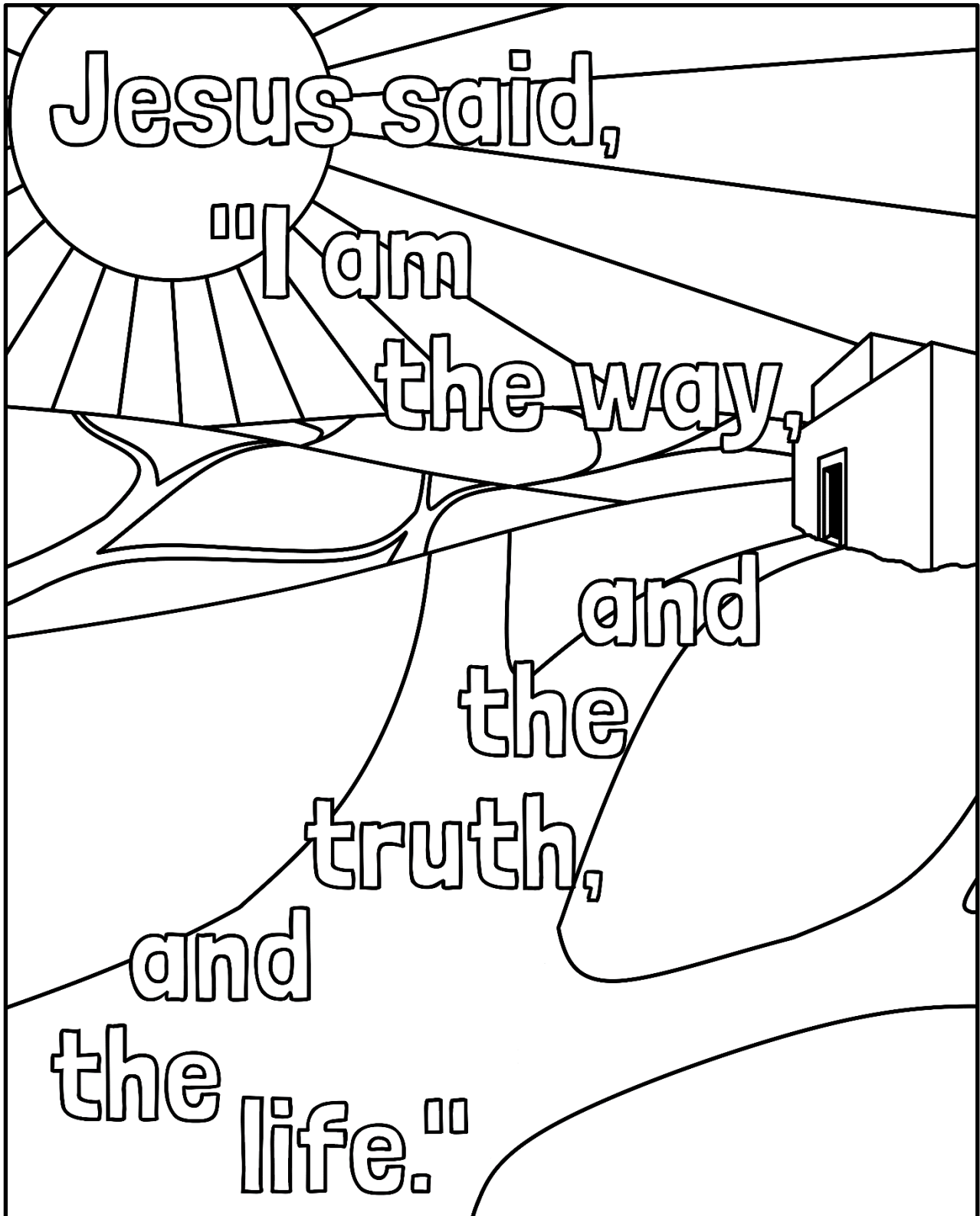
I wonder which words seem most important?

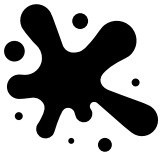


Take a Break

Put on some music, or listen to the passage being read out while you simply sit and be. You can colour the picture below, or fill it with zentangles, or you can just spend the time breathing.

John 14 on Bible Gateway audio [ESV](#) – [Message](#) – [NIV \(Dramatised\)](#) – [NIV \(Suchet\)](#)





Creation Station – Many Rooms

Jesus said that God's house has many rooms, and that there is a place for each of us there. We can think about this by making a mini-version of God's house, with just a few of his many, many rooms. (Image by Sabine Lena.)

You will need:

- Cereal boxes
- Scissors
- Sticky tape
- Brown (or coloured) wrapping paper, or paint with PVA glue mixed in
- Coloured pens

What to do:

1. Cut the front of one box around three sides so that it opens like a door. Tape down the top. This will be your house.
2. Cover the box, inside and out with wrapping paper or paint it using a mixture of glue and paint (so that it will stick to the shiny card).
3. Draw a front door and lots of windows on the outside of the house. You could add bricks, trees or flowers if you like.



4. Cut up the other boxes into strips the same width as your house box. These will be for walls and floors. You can paint the strips if you like, or cover them with paper, or just leave them plain.
5. Stick the floors in first using sticky tape, then add the walls. You can decide how many rooms you want to have. One will be for you, and others can be for anyone you choose. If you want, you can add a pointed roof as well.
6. When you have made all your rooms, you can draw all the things inside them with coloured pens, or cut pictures out of magazines and stick them in. You could even use toy furniture! What will you put in your room?
7. Remember that God's house has room for everyone, and God lives there too!



Outside In

“Do not let your hearts be troubled”

It's good to get outdoors if you can do so safely, being sure to follow physical distancing rules. If you can't get out, try bringing the outside in.

Jesus' friends were worried and upset, but Jesus comforted them. Sometimes we are worried, too. Here are some suggestions for calming troubled hearts.

- Go for a walk, somewhere green if you can, but even walking inside will help.
- Draw or paint. It does not matter if it's not great art, you can just play with colour.
- Practice slow breathing. Sit comfortably and breathe in as you think a line of The Lord's Prayer. Pause, then breathe out as you think the next line. Pause and repeat.
- Keep a journal. Write (or draw) in it for five minutes every day, Tell Jesus all about what is worrying you. Then close the book and set it aside until the next day.
- Make a 'worry doll' to look after. Tie some yarn or ribbon around a cushion to make a head and body, and add eyes and hair. Then talk to your doll and reassure them. Help your doll to sort out which worries are not likely to happen.
- Find something from outdoors, perhaps a flower or a blade of grass, and look at it - *really* look at it. See all the tiny parts and fine details. Isn't creation amazing!
- Scrunch yourself into a tight ball with all your muscles tense. Then slowly, bit-by-bit, relax your muscles and let yourself go floppy. See if you can drip through the floor.
- Help someone else. What can you do to help someone who needs you?

What else can you think of?

My ideas:

Which will you do this week?



High 5

Spend five minutes talking and listening with God. Here is one way:

WWDP prayers

John 14:14 says “You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.” Sometimes people think this means we can ask for anything, like “*Dear God, please give me a million pounds*”, and tack “*in the name of Jesus, Amen.*” on the end, and God has to do it. Nope.

To do something in someone's name means to act as their representative, to do what they would have done. It's like casting my granny's vote if she can't get to the polling station. I don't get to choose which way to vote. I vote the way my granny would have done.

So to pray in Jesus' name, we pray as he did. **WWJP – What Would Jesus Pray?**

Choose five things that Jesus said are important, and write them below, then pray about them. Here are some suggestions: **Loving God** (Mark 12:30). **Loving our neighbours** (Mark 12:31). **Giving** (Luke 21:1-4). **Mercy** (John 8:7). **Attitude to money** (Matthew 6:19-21). **Trusting God** (Matthew 6:33-34). **Being judgemental** (Matthew 7:3-4). **Forgiveness** (Luke 6:37). **Humility** (Matthew 18:4). **Caring for the needy** (Matthew 25:40). Can you think of others?

Five large, empty, rounded rectangular boxes with double-line borders, intended for writing down five things that Jesus said are important and praying about them.