

Our Sabbath Scripture Stories



F A M I L I E S R E C L A I M I N G S U N D A Y

Read aloud: Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

1 John 4:7-10

Gospel: John 15:9-17

What a spectacular Sunday morning! The sun was shining through the big living room window at the Pauline house. Dad was sitting in his favorite reading chair glancing through the Sunday paper at all the gardening ads. Conditions were right for some serious planting, and he loved the thought of digging in the dirt again. Right beside him, Baby Ben was peering at the same ad. He was checking out the bright plastic dirt shovels, probably dreaming of all the mud pies he could make.

Just then Mom called out. "It's 9 o'clock! Let's go through our Gospel reading for Mass this morning!"

Everyone scrambled to their seats at the kitchen table. When they were settled, Dad opened his Bible to John, Chapter 15. He read the Gospel slowly and with real sincerity in his voice. He finished with the very heart of the entire Gospel message: " *'This I command you: love one another.'*" (John 15:17)

While everyone was still thinking about the words of Jesus for that morning, Mom came around and handed two things to each of her children. One was a bright piece of paper. At the top of the page, it said, "For the love of Jesus, and for the love of others, I will ... "

The other thing Mom gave each of them was a packet of flower seeds. Each one had a different kind like daisies, pansies, bluebells, and marigolds. It was a wide array of flower seeds.

"What's all this about?" the Pauline kids all seemed to ask together.

"Well," answered Mom. "I thought that, in keeping with the theme of the Gospel reading for today, we would do something special. What I want you all to do is to write down one thing that you will do as an extra act of love and kindness for someone else. When you are all done, I am going to put them in this baggie."

"A baggie!" said Vincent. "Are we going to keep them in the refrigerator?"

Everyone laughed as Mom answered very matter-of-factly. "No, Vincent. We are going to bury them."

"Huh?" they all replied.

Now Mom was laughing. "This year we are not going to have a window box outside, we are going to have a LOVE BOX. Now, Everyone, open your packet of seeds."

The kids still did not get it, but they obediently opened their packet of seeds.

"Now, Everyone, pour your seeds into this bowl," Mom directed.

Even though the kids were still scratching their heads, they did it.

Mom stirred up the seeds while Dad passed out pencils. They all started writing down something they would do out of love for someone else.

"I am going to write down that I will do the dishes without being asked," gleamed Lucy.

"I will help Mr. Pengally with his lawn, and I won't take any money for it either," Vincent declared.

"What I'll do is not talk about anyone at school in a negative way," Mary Clare said. "I am going to try to speak only words of encouragement."

"I am going to put together all the family's socks!" 4-year-old Hillary said. "I know Mommy would like that!"

Mom and Dad finished theirs and helped 1-year-old Ben scribble something known only to God. They sealed the intentions inside the bag.

"What now?" Vincent asked.

"Well, let's go outside to our window box and see," Mr. Pauline directed.

The Paulines all filed outside to the window box right outside the kitchen window. Mr. Pauline took a small spade and dug a deep hole in the middle. He put the sealed bag down deep, covered it with soil and then scattered all the seeds on top.

"When our LOVE BOX blooms, we will all be reminded of our commitments of kindness and, most importantly, of the words of Jesus, *'This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.'* (John 15:12)"



"This is something we can enjoy all summer," Mom said as she poured water on top.

"And from our window, it is in a direct line to Mr. Pengally's house," sighed Vincent. "I am sure not going to be able to forget!"

Just then, Mom and Dad started humming. Within seconds, they both burst into a famous theme song: "*The LOVE BOX soon will be making another round. The LOVE BOX soon will mean something to everyone!*" Well ... it was close!