



Another Comforter

John 14:15-21

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

Here is what you will find in each resource pack:



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!)



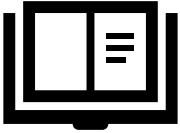
Outside In

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 14:15-21

If you love me, keep my commands.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you for ever – the Spirit of truth.

The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me any more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.

(NV)



Food for Thought

Click for bonus reflection on this passage on my blog, [\[The Reflectionary\]](#).

There's a word in this passage that is tricky to translate. Some Bibles render it advocate (Isn't that a kind of fruit?), counsellor (a psychiatrist?), comforter (a blankets?) or helper (is that a homework helper or more like a PA?).

All of these show certain aspects of the meaning, but we really don't have an English word that encompasses them all. Advocate is a legal term, one who argues your case, while a Counsellor is a wise friend, and Comforter describes the effect that such a one has. But perhaps *paraclete* (the Greek word) is the most useful. (And no, it's not a tropical bird.)

Para means *next to*, (like in parallel) and the *clate* bit means *someone who is called*. So we are talking about someone who is called to be alongside you.

Q: What words or phrases could you use to translate 'paraclete', someone who is called to be alongside you?

Jesus explains a bit more about this person who sits beside us later in the chapter, saying, "the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." (John 14:26) Later in this same speech, Jesus explains that until he goes away, the Holy Spirit cannot come. (John 16:7)

Slide forward a few chapters to when Jesus would appear to his disciples on the evening of Easter Sunday, and he breathes on his frightened, bewildered followers and says, "receive the Holy Spirit". (John 20:22).

Q: What changed about the disciples after their encounter with the risen Lord Jesus? What effects do you think were caused by them having received the Counsellor / Comforter / Advocate / Helper?

Did you notice that Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit as 'another' advocate? Another, implying that there was a different one before.

So who is this first advocate, this one pleading our cause, defending us again accusers, counselling and comforting us, this one who 'has our back'? John explains in the only other place in the Bible that uses the word *παράκλητον* (*parakleton*).

"My dear children", he says in a letter written later in his life, "I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an *advocate* with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One." (1 John 2:1)

This is why Jesus says that he will not leave us as orphans, We will not be left without anyone to look after us, because Jesus, now our advocate in heaven, has arranged for the Holy Spirit to be his replacement and to be with us for ever.

Q: What do this tell us about the role of a paraclete? How would you explain this word to someone who had never heard it before?



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?



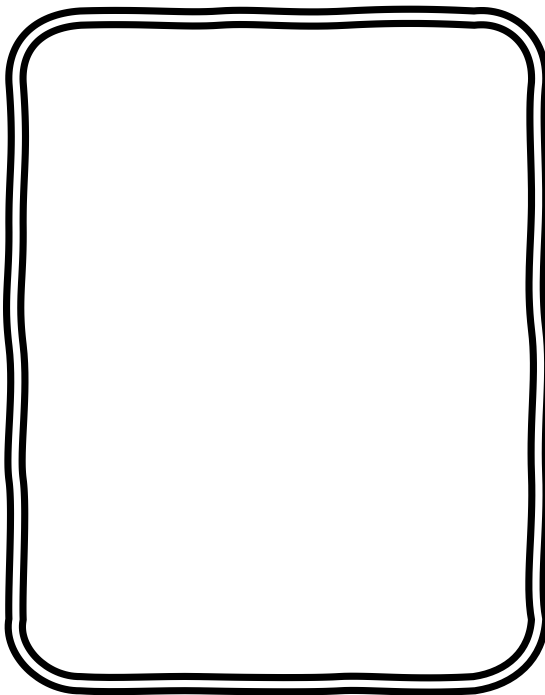
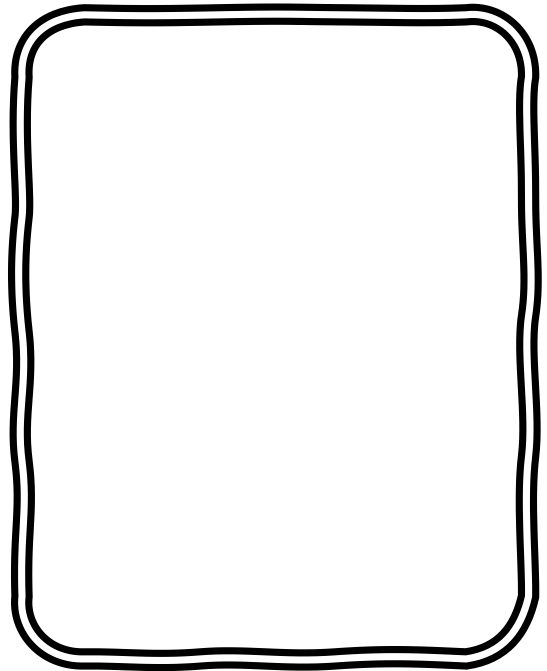
Looking Closer

If you love me, keep my commands.

I don't know about you, but 'commands' makes me think of army officers yelling at their soldiers, or teachers giving out detentions for kids who didn't do their homework. It doesn't sound much like Jesus.

This shows how important it is to not read single Bible verses on their own. If we only read this one verse, it would sound like Jesus is a bossy-boots and we are all grovelling slaves. Let's look earlier in Jesus' speech and find out what he is talking about.

Look up John 13:34. What does Jesus say about his command? Write it or draw it here.



Imagine it's your birthday, and you get a load of books from Granny, but they are all ones you already have. Or perhaps some new clothes, but they're a size too small. Or a signed poster of your favourite team. Except it's the wrong team.

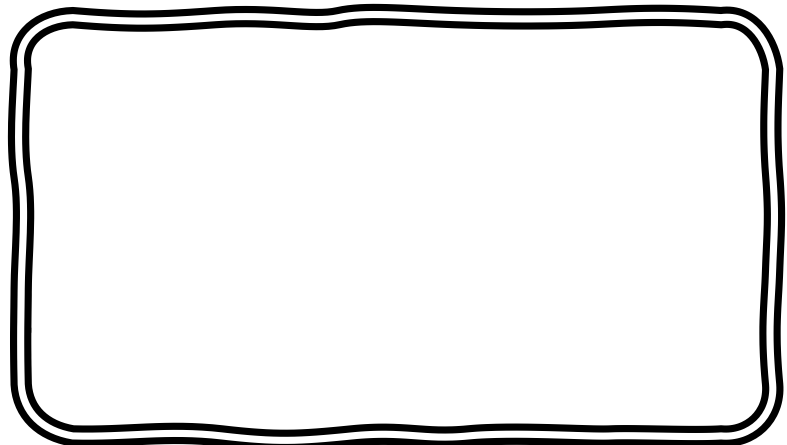
It was really kind of Granny to give you the books, but perhaps next time you should write a birthday list to let her know what you would like. It's not that you will only love Granny if she gets the things on your list, but if she wants to get you something, here are things that would make you happy.

Jesus' command is not an angry shouted order but 'this is how you can show your love for me'.

How can we show love for Jesus? Can you draw something here?

Jesus said that his command is that we love each other. And the way we show our love is to obey his command. And we obey his command by loving ... it just goes round and round and round.

What does loving each other actually mean? What could you do today?





I Wonder...

Jesus said that he will not leave us alone. He will not leave us as orphans, but is with us for now and for ever. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit will walk alongside us, to guide and comfort us.

I wonder what you think is the most important bit.

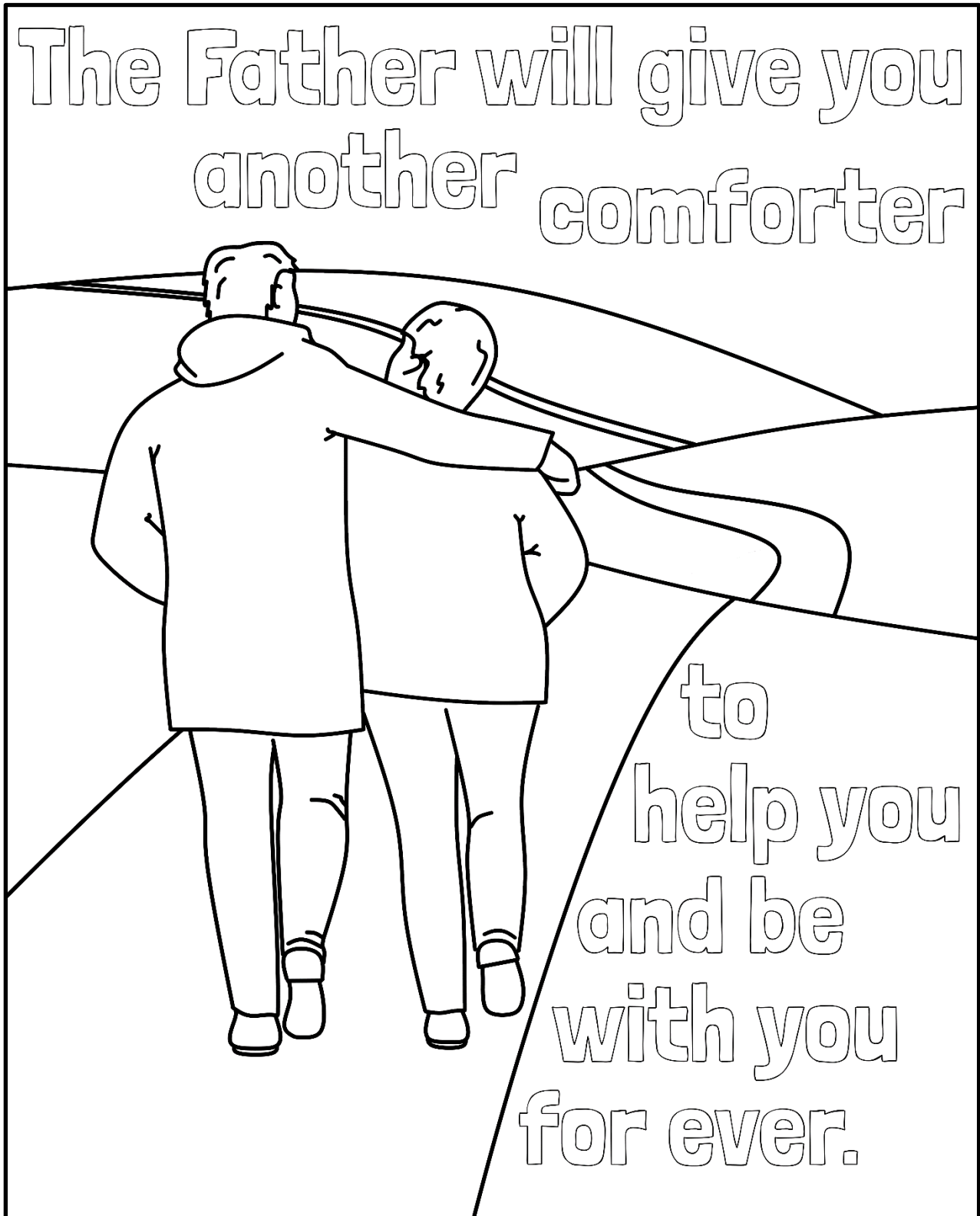
I wonder what will change because of these words.

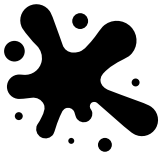


Take a Break

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 – Möbius Band

We can make an intriguing memory-verse Möbius (say Moh-bee-us) band to help us think about Jesus' words: "If you love me you will obey my command." And what was that command? Jesus had mentioned that a little earlier, in chapter 13. "I give you a new command: Love each other."

You will need:

- Glue stick
- A strip of thin card and marker pens
or print out the template on the next page
- Coloured pens or pencils

What to do:

1. If you are using the template, print it onto paper and cut along the **solid** lines. One page will make 6 memory verses.
2. Colour the lettering, then fold along the dotted line and stick the sides together to make a long double-sided strip.
3. If you are using card, cut a strip about 2cm x 20cm – the width of A4 is perfect.
4. Write '**to love is to obey**' in big letters on one side, and try to make the text fill the strip. Add the Bible verse, John 14:15, in small writing underneath.
5. Flip the card over *top to bottom* (this is important) and write '**my command is**' on the other side, leaving small gaps at the beginning and end. Write John 13:34 underneath in small letters.
6. Whichever method you use to make your double-sided strip, we now turn it into a Möbius band. Put a dab on glue at each end of the 'command' side. Bring the ends together into a ring and twist one end so that the two dabs of glue meet.
7. You should now have an endless twisted ring that reads:

... my command is to love ... to love is to obey my command ...



my command is

John 13:34

to love is to obey

John 14:15

my command is

John 13:34

to love is to obey

John 14:15

my command is

John 13:34

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John 14:15



Outside In

“I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you.”

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 promised to be with us always, and to give us the Holy Spirit to walk alongside us, to guide and comfort us. Here are some ideas to remind us that we are not alone.

- Go outside tonight and look at the moon. Think about all the people in the world who are looking at the same moon, and God who sees us all.
- Gather some stones and name each one with people in your family, friends and others you care about. You can write their names on in chalk or with permanent markers. Add one more stone for yourself and arrange your friends and family around you, thanking God for each one.
- Go outside (if you can) and read aloud one of the 'nature' psalms, such as Psalm 96, Psalm 104 or Psalm 148. Can you find everything that the psalm mentions?
- Go on a walk, outside or inside, with a member of your household to guide you. You are only allowed to go in the direction that your guide tells you, so choose someone who won't lead you down a rabbit hole or into a wall!
- Choose a favourite Bible verse that speaks of God's care for us and send it to someone. You could write or print it on some card and decorate around it, or send it as an email, or make an image and post it on social media, what every suits 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:

We will pray through all our bodies, starting with our feet. You can make your own prayers, or use these as starters.

Feet – Our feet take us the way we want to go.

Dear God, I want to follow you and walk in your ways. Please forgive me when I'm not very good at it, or when I wander off the wrong way. Thank you that you always walk with me and give your Holy Spirit to be my guide and comforter. Amen.

Knees – We kneel in front of important people.

Dear God, you are all powerful, all kind and all good. You are greater than all kings and presidents and generals. I kneel before your majesty and praise your glorious name. You are my God, and I worship you. Amen.

Stomach – It turns our food in to the goodness our body needs.

*Dear God, thank you for all the good things you give us; for our homes, friends, family and food. Thank you especially for
Please help us to look after people who do not have enough food to eat, and to make sure that everyone has a fair share of Earth's good things. Amen.*

Hands – Our hands can do many things.

Dear God, may we use our hands to do good to those around us. May we act like Jesus in our part of your kingdom, showing your light and love to all. Show us what we can do to make the world a little bit better in this this hour, this day and this week. Amen.

Shoulders – Shoulders can carry heavy loads.

Dear God, please be near to all who are carrying heavy loads: those who are working very long hours and are tired; those under a burden of worry for friends and family or for jobs and income; and particularly those who are mourning the loss of loved ones. May we look to you as Comforter in our sorrow, O Lord, we pray. Amen.

Head – Heads do our thinking and make decisions

Dear God, please give wisdom to all the people who make decisions in our country. Help our leaders to make fair laws and to look after people and the world. Please look after the doctors and scientists who are making cures for Coronavirus. Help them to do their work well and to keep safe. Amen.

What other prayers can you add?