

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

LADDERS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Revelation (John 1: 43-51)

The Gospel reading is from John's account of the beginning of Jesus' ministry. On the previous day Andrew had followed Jesus and told his brother Simon. Today Philip follows Jesus and tells Nathanael. When Andrew followed Jesus he said, 'We have found the Messiah.' When Nathanael followed Jesus he said, 'You are the Son of God.' To both men the true identity of Jesus has been revealed. As Messiah and as Son of God Jesus becomes the way of communication between God and men and women. Jesus is like a ladder between heaven and earth along which the angels (God's messengers) travel.

Our image to stimulate reflection on John's theme of Jesus becoming the way of communication between God and men and women is *ladders*.

Core extracts from the Gospel (John 1: 49-51; for reflection throughout the week)

Nathanael replied,

'Rabbi, you are the Son of God!

You are the King of Israel!'

Jesus answered,

'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree?

You will see greater things than these.'

And he said to him, 'Very truly,

I tell you, you will see heaven opened

and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,

your love links heaven and earth.

Lift our eyes to the highest heavens

and set our hearts on your true love,

so where you are we may be also;

now and for ever.

Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

John 1: 43-51

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

SECOND SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY (YEAR B) Sunday 14 January 2024

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (Reflecting and meditating John 1: 43-51)

Begin exploring John's account of Jesus' encounter with Philip and Nathaniel by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

Thinking and talking

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- What do you make of Jesus' invitation to Philip, 'Follow me'?
- What do you make of Philip's invitation to Nathaniel, 'Come and see'?
- What do you make of Nathaniel's confession of faith, 'You are the Son of God'?
- What do you make of Jesus speaking of the angels ascending and descending?
- What does this passage say for us today?

Using your Bible

Find the other reference to Nathaniel in the Gospels:

- John 21: 2

Explore passages in the Old Testament that illuminate this account:

- Genesis 28: 12
- Ezekiel 1: 1
- Micah 4: 4

Exploring online

Widen your exploration of John's account of Jesus' encounter with Philip and Nathaniel by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Nathaniel in the Bible
- Jacob's ladder in the Bible
- John 1: 51

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Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on John's account of Jesus' encounter with Philip and Nathaniel and John's theme of Jesus becoming the way of communication between God and men and women is *ladders*. Draw on your experience of ladders. For example:

- Your experiences of ladders and stairs that make connections
- Your experiences of connections between earth and heaven
- Your experiences of Jesus making connections

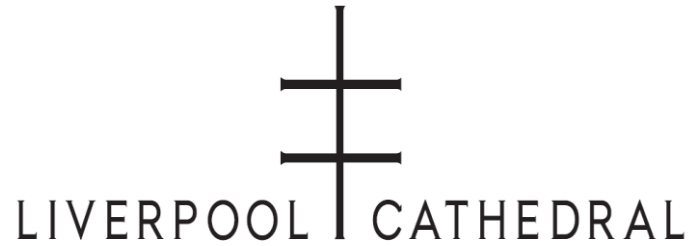
What have you learned about ladders?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by John's account of Jesus' encounter with Philip and Nathaniel or the image of ladders.

- Make a ladder and make angels to ascend and descend.
- Make a poster of Jesus' encounter with Philip and Nathaniel.
- Create a collage of ladders and stairs that make connections.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme John's account of Jesus' encounter with Philip and Nathaniel, or the image of ladders.

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EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

Our invitation then is for you to share your reflections, prayers and photos of your creative work with the Cathedral by emailing them to smc.lesliefrancis@gmail.com.

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales and the St Christopher's College Trust.



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