

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

WORDS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

The divine word (John 1:1-14)

The first fourteen verses of John's Gospel are generally known as the Prologue. Here John introduces themes which are central to his understanding of the person of Jesus. In the first sentence John uses the Greek word *logos* which is generally translated as *word*. In fact the Greek word conveys much more than the simple translation suggests. The Greek word points to God's creative power, purpose and wisdom, and to the reason and rationality underpinning life.

Our image to stimulate reflection on the Prologue to John's Gospel is *words*.

Core extracts from the Gospel passage (John 1: 1-3; for reflection throughout the week)

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.
All things came into being through him,
and without him not one thing came into being.

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
you are there from the beginning,
the Word dwelling with God,
and the light of the world.
Open our eyes to see your light
and open our ears to hear your word
now and always.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

John 1: 1-14

The Gospel According to John

The Word Became Flesh

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (John 1: 1-14)

Begin to explore the Prologue to John's Gospel 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.

- Of what do the opening words 'In the beginning' remind you?
- What is John speaking about when he refers to 'the Word'?
- How do you understand John's reference to light and to darkness?
- How do you understand 'the Word became flesh and lived among us'?
- What is this passage saying for us today?

Using your Bible

Explore images in the Old Testament that resonate with the Prologue:

- Genesis 1: 1-5
- Psalm 33: 6-9

Explore how themes from the Prologue are followed up in John's Gospel:

- John 1: 17
- John 2: 11
- John 3: 19

Explore themes in the wider Johannine literature:

- 1 John 1: 1-2
- Revelation 1: 8

SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT (YEAR B) Sunday 4 February 2024

Exploring online

Widen your exploration of the Prologue to John's Gospel by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Logos in John's Gospel
- Power of words in the Bible
- In the beginning was the Word

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on the Prologue to John's Gospel is *words*. Draw on your experience of words. For example:

- When and where have you heard the Prologue to John's Gospel read well?
- When have you been particularly moved by the power of words?
- What words fascinate you and get your attention?

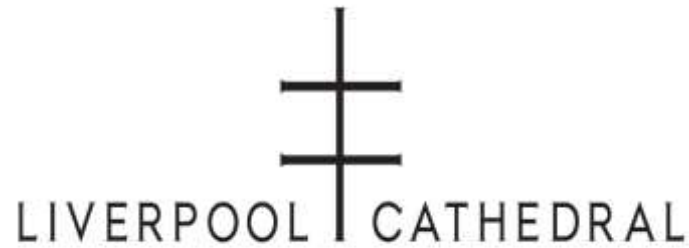
What have you learned about words and about words?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by the theme of the Prologue of John's Gospel or by the image of words.

- Make a collage of words.
- Create a poster illustrating the Prologue of John's Gospel.
- Display different translations of the Prologue of John's Gospel.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of the Prologue of John's Gospel or on the image of words.

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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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