

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

SELL-BY DATE

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Bread of life (John 6: 24-35)

In John's Gospel the feeding of the five thousand opens the way for Jesus to teach about himself as the bread of life. In this teaching Jesus contrasts the need for physical food with the need for spiritual food. The followers whom Jesus desires to attract are those who have seen through the physical feeding to its spiritual significance. Jesus exhorts them, 'Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life.'

Our image to stimulate reflection on John's teaching about the food that perishes is *sell-by date*.

Core extract from the Gospel (John 6: 27, 33-35; for reflection throughout the week)

Jesus said, 'Do not work for the food that perishes,
but for the food that endures for eternal life,
which the Son of Man will give you.

For the bread of God
is that which comes down from heaven
and gives life to the world.'

They said to him,
'Sir, give us this bread always.'

Jesus said to them,
'I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught your people
to work for the things that last.
Give us grace to follow your teaching,
that we may share with you
the things that really matter;
for you are the Bread of Life.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

John 6: 24-35

So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.' Then they said to him, 'What must we do to perform the works of God?' Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.' So they said to him, 'What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."' Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.'

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (John 6: 24-35)

Begin exploring John's presentation of Jesus' teaching about the food 'that endures for external life' 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.

- So why did the crowd go looking for Jesus?
- What does Jesus mean by saying 'you are looking for me, not because you saw signs'?
- What does Jesus mean by 'the food that endures to eternal life'?
- What is Jesus referring to when he says 'The bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world'?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

Explore the significance of signs in John's Gospel, and Jesus as the one who comes down from heaven.

- John 2: 11
- John 4: 54
- John 6: 14
- John 1: 10-14

Explore the feeding in the wilderness in the Old Testament.

- Exodus 16: 1-15
- Psalm 78: 15-26
- Psalm 105: 38-42

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (YEAR B) Sunday 4 August 2024

Exploring online

Widen your exploration of John's presentation of Jesus' teaching about the food 'that endures for external life' by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- What does John 6: 27 mean?
- Manna from heaven in classic art
- Sell-by dates

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on John's presentation of Jesus' teaching about the food 'that endures for external life' is *sell-by date*. Draw on your own experience of sell-by dates. For example:

- What is your experience of sell-by dates?
- How do you distinguish between what is perishable and not perishable?
- What is your experience of that which endures for external life?

What have you learned about sell-by dates?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by John's presentation of Jesus' teaching about the food 'that endures for external life' or by the image of sell-by dates.

- Create a picture of manna in the wilderness.
- Make a display of sell-by dates.
- Create a collage of images contrasting things that are perishable and things that endure.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of the food that endures for eternal life or on the image of sell-by dates.



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.



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