

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (YEAR B) Sunday 6 October  
2024

## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

### CHILDREN

#### EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

##### *Introducing the Gospel*

*Jesus blesses little children (Mark 10: 2-16)*

There are two key places in Mark's Gospel where Jesus gives priority to children. In Mark 9: 35-37 Jesus affirmed that 'whoever welcomes a child in my name welcomes me.' In today's passage Jesus affirmed that 'it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs.' On both occasions Jesus was contrasting the acceptability of the child with the behaviour of his disciples.

Our image to stimulate reflection on Jesus' teaching about the young is *children*.

##### *Core extract from the Gospel (Mark 10: 14-16; for reflection throughout the week)*

Jesus said,  
'Let the little children come to me;  
do not stop them;  
for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs.  
Truly I tell you,  
whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God  
as a little child will never enter it.'  
And Jesus took them up in his arms,  
laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

##### *Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you welcomed children into your community,  
and you invited your disciples to learn from them.  
Open our eyes to the children in our community;  
open our ears to their voices,  
and our hearts to their searching;  
for the Kingdom of God belongs to them.  
We make our prayer in your name.  
Amen.

## **READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL**

### **Mark 10: 2-16**

Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?' He answered them, 'What did Moses command you?' They said, 'Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her.' But Jesus said to them, 'Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female." "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.'

Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. He said to them, 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.'

### **Jesus Blesses Little Children**

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (YEAR B) Sunday 6 October 2024

## **ENGAGING WITH THE THEME**

### ***Dwelling with the text (Mark 10: 2-16)***

Begin exploring Mark's account of Jesus' teaching about the place of children within the Kingdom of God 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.

- Why were people bringing children to Jesus?
- Why were the disciples trying to stop them?
- How does Jesus deal with this situation?
- What is meant by Jesus blessing the children?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

### ***Using your Bible***

Explore how Matthew and Luke draw on this passage in Mark.

- Matthew 19: 13-15
- Luke 18: 15-17

Explore Mark's earlier reference to children.

- Mark 9: 35-37

Explore other references to children in Luke and Matthew.

- Matthew 11: 16-19
- Luke 7: 31-35
- Matthew 21: 15-16

Explore references to children in the Old Testament.

- Proverbs 22: 6
- Psalm 127: 3-5

## NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (YEAR B) Sunday 6 October 2024

### *Exploring online*

Widen your exploration of Mark's account of Jesus' teaching about the place of children within the Kingdom of God by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Jesus and children
- Children in church
- Reimagining *ecclesia domestica*

### *Drawing on experience*

The image to stimulate reflection on Mark's account of Jesus' teaching about the place of children in the Kingdom of God is *children*. Draw on your own experience of children. For example:

- When have you learned something important from children?
- What is your experience of children in church?
- What do you recall from your childhood that surprises you?

What have you learned about children?

### *Creating and making*

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Mark's account of Jesus' teaching about the place of children within the Kingdom of God, or by the image of children.

- Listen to the experience of children in your church and ask them to create a collage of their images of church.
- Invite members of your congregation to bring pictures of themselves when they were children.
- Make a display of resources for children in churches.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on Mark's account of Jesus' teaching about the place of children within the Kingdom of God or on the image of children.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (YEAR B) Sunday 6 October  
2024



**Liverpool  
Cathedral**

## **EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL**

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](mailto: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.



The scripture quotations contained in these materials are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Anglicised Edition, copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, and is used with permission. All rights reserved.

Copyright © Leslie J. Francis, 2024  
Canon Theologian Liverpool Cathedral  
with sponsorship and support from  
St Mary's Centre, Wales