

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

HEARTS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

The new commandment (John 13: 31-35)

In John's account of Jesus' last supper with his disciples, Jesus gives them a new commandment. In the synoptic Gospels Jesus is portrayed as summing up the law of Moses in terms of the two great commandments, to love God and to love your neighbour as yourself. Here in John's Gospel Jesus gives his followers a new commandment, that they love one another. This new commandment has been characterised as the essence of the Christian way of life.

The image to stimulate reflection on the new commandment Jesus gives to his followers is *hearts*.

Core extract from the Gospel (John 13: 34-35); for reflection throughout the week

Jesus said, 'I give you a new commandment,
that you love one another.
Just as I have loved you,
you also should love one another.
By this everyone will know that you are my disciples,
if you have love for one another.'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Risen Lord,
you gave us a new commandment
that we should love one another.
Fill our hearts with your love
and empower us to share your love with others,
that all may know us to be your disciples;
for you are our God.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

John 13: 31-35

The New Commandment

When he had gone out, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, “Where I am going, you cannot come.” I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.’

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (John 13: 31-35)

Begin to explore John's account of the new commandment that Jesus gave to his followers 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 is the context in which Jesus is speaking in John 13?
- What were the two key commandments in the Old Testament Law?
- What does Jesus ask of his followers?
- Why does Jesus ask this of his followers?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

Explore the context in which Jesus is speaking in John 13.

- John 13: 1-5
- John 13: 12-17
- John 13: 21-30

Explore Jesus' teaching about the commandments in the synoptic Gospels.

- Mark 12: 28-33
- Deuteronomy 6: 4-5
- Leviticus 19: 18

Explore the significance of love in 1 Corinthians.

- 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (YEAR C) Sunday 18 May 2025

Exploring online

Widen your exploration of John's presentation of a new commandment that Jesus gave to his followers by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Jesus' new commandment
- The four loves
- Heart symbolism (images)

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on Jesus' new commandment is *hearts*. Draw on your own experience of the symbolism of hearts. For example:

- When has the symbol of a heart been important to you?
- What occasions or situations do you associate with hearts?
- How would you envisage the symbol of hearts being used in liturgy?

What have you learned about the symbolism of hearts?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by John's account of the new commandment that Jesus gave to his followers or by the image of hearts.

- Make cut out hearts and write on them 'love is...'.
• Make a collage of different images of hearts.
• Make a poster illustrating the love shown by Jesus' followers to the world.
• Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Jesus' new commandment or on the image of hearts.



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.

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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