

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

SHARING GOOD NEWS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Legion is healed (Luke 8: 26-39)

The healing of Legion once again demonstrates Jesus' power over the forces of evil. This time the forces of evil are great indeed. The man was called Legion, for many demons had entered him. When exorcised the demons were so powerful that they destroyed a whole herd of swine. Such clear evidence of Jesus' power over evil deserved broadcasting. The healed man went away proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

The image to stimulate reflection on this narrative is *sharing good news*.

Core extract from the Gospel (Luke 8: 38-39; for reflection throughout the week)

The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying,
'Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.'
So he went away,
proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
you told Legion
to proclaim your healing power to the world.
Empower us to proclaim to others
everything you have done in our lives,
that your name may be praised by all;
for you are our God,
now and always.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Luke 8: 26-39

Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me'— for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) Jesus then asked him, 'What is your name?' He said, 'Legion'; for many demons had entered him. They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.' So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (Luke 8: 26-39)

Begin to explore Luke's account of Jesus' encounter with Legion 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 Legion naming Jesus as 'Son of the Most High God'?
- How do you understand the demons entering the swine?
- What do you make of Jesus not allowing Legion to stay with him?
- How do you understand the command 'Declare how much God has done for you'?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

Compare how this narrative is presented in the other Synoptic Gospels.

- Matthew 8: 28 - 9: 1
- Mark 5: 1-20

Explore occasions when Jesus commanded people not to tell others.

- Luke 5: 12-15

Explore Psalms of proclamation.

- Psalm 34: 1-8
- Psalm 66: 14-15

Explore teaching about swine in the Old Testament.

- Leviticus 11: 7
- Deuteronomy 14: 8

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Exploring online

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

- the Gerasene swine
- the healing of Legion in classic art
- Jesus said 'Go and tell'

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on Luke's account of Jesus' encounter with Legion is *sharing good news*. Draw on your own experience of people sharing good news and its impact on others. For example:

- What opportunities have you had to share good news?
- What stays in your mind about good news shared by others?
- What is your experience of people giving testimonies of what Jesus has done for them?

What have you learned about sharing good news?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Luke's account of Jesus' encounter with Legion or by the image of sharing good news.

- Make a poster telling the story of Legion.
- Make a collage of recent good news items from around the world.
- Make a display of good news items from your congregation.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Luke's account of Jesus' encounter with Legion or on the theme of sharing good news.



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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