

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

COURIERS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Mission of the seventy (Luke 10:1-11, 16-20)

All three Synoptic Gospels tell of Jesus sending the twelve disciples on a missionary journey. Luke alone among the Synoptic Gospels tells of the mission of the seventy. Quite similar instructions are given to both groups. They are to carry no purse, no bag, no sandals, and to greet no one on the road. Haste and speed are all important. The number seventy is highly symbolic. There were seventy gentile nations (Genesis 10). Seventy elders accompanied Moses on the holy mount and received a portion of his prophetic spirit (Numbers 11: 25).

The image to stimulate reflection on Luke's account of the mission of the seventy is *couriers*.

Core extract from the Gospel (Luke 10: 1-2; for reflection throughout the week)

The Lord appointed seventy others
and sent them on ahead of him in pairs
to every town and place where he himself intended to go.
He said to them,
'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few;
therefore ask the Lord of the harvest
to send out labourers into his harvest.'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
you sent your messengers
to prepare the way before you.
Send us out in your name
to share your good news with others,
that all may hear of your love and power;
for you are our God,
now and always.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Luke 10: 1-11, 16-20

The Mission of the Seventy

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, “Peace to this house!” And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.” But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, “Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.”

‘Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.’

The Return of the Seventy

The seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!’ He said to them, ‘I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.’

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (Luke 10: 1-11, 16-20)

Begin to explore Luke's account of the mission of the seventy 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 Jesus appointing seventy others?
- How do you interpret Jesus' instructions to those seventy?
- What is the importance of the greeting, 'Peace to this house'?
- What is the significance of the claim 'the Kingdom of God has come near'?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

Compare Luke's narrative of the seventy with Matthew and Mark's account of the twelve.

- Mark 6: 7-13
- Matthew 10: 1-15

Explore significances of seventy in the Old Testament.

- Genesis 10
- Exodus 24: 1, 9
- Numbers 11: 16, 24

Explore imagery from the Old Testament.

- 1 Samuel 25: 6
- 2 Kings 4: 29

Explore imagery from Acts of the Apostles.

- Acts 13: 51

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (YEAR C) Sunday 6 July 2025

Exploring online

Widen your exploration of Luke's account of the mission of the seventy by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- seventy nations of Genesis 10
- mission of the seventy
- mission today

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on Luke's account of the mission of the seventy is *couriers*. Draw on your own experiences of couriers. For example:

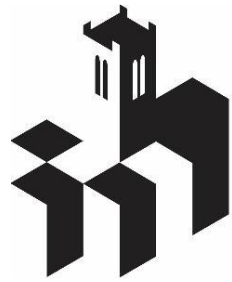
- When have you experienced couriers at work?
- What is your impression of the speed and efficiency of couriers?
- When have you seen films of couriers delivering messages?

What have you learned about couriers?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Luke's account of the mission of the seventy or by the image of couriers.

- Make a poster of Jesus' instructions to the seventy.
- Create a collage of images of couriers.
- Create a poster on mission today.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of mission of the seventy or on the image of couriers.



**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.

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, 2025
Canon Theologian Liverpool Cathedral
with sponsorship and support from
St Mary's Centre, Wales