

## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

# HOUSE OF PRAYER

### EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

#### *Introducing the Gospel*

##### *Jesus cleanses the temple (John 2: 13-22)*

Jesus' disruptive action of entering and cleansing the temple at Jerusalem is reported in all three of the Synoptic Gospels as well as in John's Gospel. In all four Gospels this is a decisive and prophetic action. In John's Gospel Jesus accuses them of turning his Father's house into a market place. In Mark's Gospel Jesus accuses them of making it a den of robbers instead of a house of prayer. In the Synoptic Gospels the cleansing of the temple prepares the way for Jesus' arrest and crucifixion at Passover. In John's Gospel the cleansing of the temple at Passover prepares the way for Jesus' ministry, as well as foreshadowing his death and resurrection.

The image to stimulate reflection on John's account of Jesus' cleansing of the temple is *house of prayer*.

#### *Core extract from the Gospel (John 2: 14-16; for reflection throughout the week)*

In the temple Jesus found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves,  
and the money-changers seated at their tables.

Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple,  
both the sheep and the cattle.

He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables.

He told those who were selling the doves,

'Take these things out of here!

Stop making my Father's house a market-place!'

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

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you entered the temple in Jerusalem  
and restored it as a house of prayer.  
Shape this house of prayer in our city  
to be a place of encounter,  
for all people;  
for you are our God,  
now and always.  
Amen

### READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

**John 2: 13-22**

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a market-place!' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

## CONSECRATION SUNDAY (YEAR C) Sunday 20 July 2025

### ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

#### *Dwelling with the text (John 2: 13-22)*

Begin to explore John's account of Jesus' cleansing of the temple 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 does John mention that the Passover was near?
- What were the money changers doing in the temple?
- What do you make of Jesus using a whip of cords?
- What do you understand by Jesus referring to the temple of his body?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

#### *Using your Bible*

Compare John's account with the three Synoptic Gospels.

- Mark 11: 15-18
- Matthew 21: 12-16
- Luke 19: 45-47

Explore passages in the Old Testament that illuminate this theme.

- 1 Kings 8: 22-30
- Psalm 69: 9
- Psalm 122: 1-9
- Isaiah 56: 7
- Malachi 3: 1-3

## CONSECRATION SUNDAY (YEAR C) Sunday 20 July 2025

### *Exploring online*

Widen your exploration of John's account of Jesus' cleansing of the temple by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- King Solomon's temple
- Second temple
- Liverpool Cathedral history

### *Drawing on experience*

The image to stimulate reflection on John's account of Jesus' cleansing of the temple is *house of prayer*. Draw on your own experience of churches and cathedrals as a house of prayer. For example:

- When have you experienced a church or cathedral as a house of prayer?
- How can churches and cathedrals be made accessible as houses of prayer?
- How would you personally like to use your church or cathedral as a house of prayer?
- What is distinctive about your experience of prayer in Liverpool Cathedral?

What have you learned about a house of prayer?

### *Creating and making*

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by John's account of Jesus' cleansing of the temple or by the image of a house of prayer.

- Create a collage of John's account of Jesus' cleansing of the temple.
- Display pictures of churches and cathedrals that evoke the image of being houses of prayer.
- Make a display of the ways in which your church or cathedral serves as a house of prayer.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on John's account of Jesus' cleansing of the temple or on the image of house of prayer.



**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.



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