

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

SQUIRRELS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Counting the cost (Luke 14: 25-33)

As Luke's Gospel takes Jesus closer to Jerusalem, Jesus' teaching about the crisis which confronts him and his followers increases in urgency. In this passage Jesus makes it clear that the disciples who continue with him on the journey need to show single-minded and determined commitment. They need to count the cost before setting out further on the road and decide whether they can complete the course. Like the squirrel who prepares stores for the winter, they need to look ahead.

The image to stimulate reflection on Luke's account of Jesus' teaching about forethought and prudence is *squirrels*.

Core extract from the Gospel (Luke 14: 27-30; for reflection throughout the week)

Jesus said, 'Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.
For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish."'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
you teach your people
to count the cost of discipleship.
Give us grace to understand the cost
and to follow you in the way of the cross,
that we may be your true disciples;
now and always.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Luke 14: 25-33

The Cost of Discipleship

Now large crowds were travelling with him; and he turned and said to them, 'Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish." Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (Luke 14: 25-33)

Begin to explore Luke's account of Jesus' teaching about forethought and prudence 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 was on Jesus' mind when he began teaching his disciples about forethought and prudence?
- How important is forethought and planning in building a tower?
- How important is forethought in planning to go to war?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

Explore parallel teaching on family commitment.

- Matthew 10: 37

Explore parallel teaching on taking up the cross.

- Mark 8: 34
- Matthew 10: 38
- Matthew 16: 24
- Luke 9: 23

The two parables on building and going to war are reported only by Luke. Explore a related idea in the Old Testament.

- Proverbs 25: 28

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (YEAR C) Sunday 7 September 2025

Exploring online

Widen your exploration of Luke's account of Jesus' teaching about forethought and prudence by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Luke 14: 28-32
- Count the cost
- Squirrels as symbol of prudence

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on Luke's account of Jesus' teaching about forethought and prudence is *squirrels*. Draw on your own experience of squirrels. For example:

- Where have you been able to watch squirrels, and what did you see?
- What gives squirrels the reputation for prudence?
- When have you benefitted from forethought and prudence?

What have you learned about squirrels?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Luke's account of Jesus' teaching about forethought and prudence or the image of squirrels.

- Create a poster telling the two parables of building a tower and going to war.
- Create a collage of pictures and information about squirrels.
- Make a habitat in which squirrels would feel at home and store their food for the winter.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Jesus' teaching about forethought and prudence or the image of squirrels.



**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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