

## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

### FRIENDS

#### EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

##### *Introducing the Gospel*

##### *Commissioning the twelve disciples (Matthew 9: 35-10:8)*

The Synoptic Gospels show Jesus as working closely with a group of twelve special disciples. The number of special disciples reflects the twelve tribes of Israel and so foreshadows the new Israel founded by Jesus. In chapter 4 Matthew has introduced the first four disciples, Peter and Andrew, James and John. Then, after the sermon on the mount and a series of healings, Matthew records the call of the fifth disciple, known in this Gospel as Matthew but as Levi in Mark's Gospel. Now for the first time all twelve disciples are named and they are commissioned as apostles.

The image to stimulate reflection on this passage is *friends*.

##### *Core extract from the Gospel (Matthew 10: 1-4; for reflection throughout the week)*

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples  
and gave them authority over unclean spirits,  
to cast them out,  
and to cure every disease and every sickness.  
These are the names of the twelve apostles:  
first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew;  
James son of Zebedee, and his brother John;  
Philip and Bartholomew;  
Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector;  
James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;  
Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot,  
the one who betrayed him.

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

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you chose twelve disciples  
to be your close followers.  
Call us to follow in their footsteps,  
that we may work alongside them  
to proclaim the reign of God in our world;  
for you are our inspiration and our life.  
Amen.

**READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL**

**Matthew 9: 35-10:8**

**The Harvest Is Great, the Labourers Few**

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

**The Twelve Apostles**

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

**The Mission of the Twelve**

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

## **ENGAGING WITH THE THEME**

### ***Dwelling with the text (Matthew 9: 35-10: 8)***

Begin to explore Matthew's teaching about the call of the twelve disciples and their commission as apostles 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.

- How do you read the context into which Matthew places the commission of the twelve (9: 35-38)?
- How do you read the task given to the twelve (10: 1)?
- What do you make of Jesus' choice of these twelve (10: 2-4)?
- What do you make of Matthew's exclusion of Samaritans and Gentiles?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

### ***Using your Bible***

Explore how the naming and commissioning of the twelve is handled in Mark and Luke.

- Mark 3: 13-19
- Mark 6: 6-13
- Luke 6: 12-16
- Luke 9: 1-6
- Luke 10: 1-16

Explore the twelve tribes in the Old Testament.

- Genesis 49: 28
- Numbers 2

## SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (YEAR A) Sunday 14 June 2026

### *Exploring online*

Widen your exploration of Matthew's teaching about the call of the twelve disciples and their commission as apostles by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Disciples or apostles
- Samaritans and Gentiles in Matthew
- Jesus' disciples at <https://teddyhorsley.org>

### *Drawing on experience*

The image to stimulate reflection on Matthew's teaching about the call of the twelve disciples and their commission as apostles is *friends*. Draw on your experience of friends. For example:

- Reflect on what real friendship has meant to you.
- Reflect on the friends you have stayed in touch with over time and why.
- How well does the idea of friendship illuminate your relationship with Jesus?

What have you learned about friends?

### *Creating and making*

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by the call and commissioning of the twelve disciples or by the image of friends.

- Create a mural placing the twelve disciples alongside members of your congregation.
- Make a collage of pictures of Jesus' twelve disciples.
- Make a poster about friends and friendship.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of the call and commissioning of the twelve disciples or on the image of friends.



# 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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