**EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME**

**DOVE**

**EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY’S THEME**

***Introducing the Gospel***

*Jesus’ baptism (Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22)*

The Gospel reading is Luke’s account of the baptism of Jesus. More than the other evangelists, Luke emphasises the role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ baptism. In Luke’s account, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus *in bodily form* like a dove. The words spoken by the voice from heaven, ‘You are my Son’ echo Psalm 2, a psalm used to celebrate the anointing of kings.

The image to stimulate reflecting on Luke’s account of the baptism of Jesus is *dove .*

***Core extract from the Gospel (Luke 3: 21-22; for reflection throughout the week)***

Now when all the people were baptized,

and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying,

the heaven was opened,

and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove.

And a voice came from heaven,

‘You are my Son, the Beloved;

with you I am well pleased.’

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

Lord Jesus Christ,

the holy dove came down at your baptism.

Let that same dove

bring the Spirit of peace to our lives;

now and always.

Amen.

**READING NEXT SUNDAY’S GOSPEL**

**Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22**

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, ‘I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.’

**The Baptism of Jesus**

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’

**ENGAGING WITH THE THEME**

***Dwelling with the text (Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22)***

Begin to explore Luke’s account of the baptism of Jesus 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 Luke deliberately preface John’s teaching by emphasising the expectations of the people?
* Why does Luke emphasise that Jesus will baptise with the Holy Spirit?
* Why does Luke emphasise the role of the Holy Spirit in the baptism of Jesus?
* What is the significance of the voice addressing Jesus alone, rather than the crowd?
* What does this narrative say for us today?

***Using your Bible***

Compare Luke’s account of the baptism of Jesus with his primary source, Mark.

* Mark 1: 7-11

Compare Luke’s account of the baptism of Jesus with Matthew.

* Matthew 3: 13-17

Explore relevant passages from the Old Testament.

* Genesis 8: 6-12
* Psalm 2: 7
* Isaiah 42: 1

***Exploring online***

Widen your exploration of Luke’s account of the baptism of Jesus by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

* Dove in Bible
* Dove as symbol of Holy Spirit
* Holy Spirit in art
* Peace doves in Liverpool Cathedral

***Drawing on experience***

The image to stimulate reflection on Luke’s account of the baptism of Jesus is the *dove.* Draw on your own experience of doves. For example:

* When have you experienced real doves?
* When have you experienced images of doves in churches?
* What feelings do pictures of peace doves generate in you?

What have you learned about doves?

***Creating and making***

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Luke’s image of the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus in bodily form like a dove.

* Make origami doves.
* Create a collage of pictures of doves.
* Create a mural illustrating the baptism of Jesus.
* Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of doves as a symbol for the Holy Spirit.



**EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME**

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.

Our invitation then is for you to share your reflections, prayers and photos of your creative work with the Cathedral by emailing them to smc.lesliefrancis@gmail.com.

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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