

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

REMOVING BARRIERS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Reflecting on the Gospel

Accepting the Gentile woman (Matthew 15: 21-28)

Jesus lived in a society in which the sense of being God's chosen people built a strong barrier between the Jewish people and the rest of the world, the Gentile nations. Jesus' own initial ministry was to the Jewish people, the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He has already fed five thousand Jews and twelve baskets full of crumbs were left over. The encounter with the Canaanite woman and with her faith shows that the barrier can be dissolved and the good news of the Kingdom extended to Gentiles as well as to Jews.

Our image to stimulate reflection on this passage is *removing barriers*.

Extracts from the Gospel passage (Matthew 15: 22, 26-28)

A Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting,
'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David;
my daughter is tormented by a demon.'
Jesus answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.'
She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.'
Then Jesus answered her,
'Woman, great is your faith!
Let it be done for you as you wish.'
And her daughter was healed instantly.

Gospel prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
you took away the barriers
between Jews and Gentiles.
Remove the barriers which divide our world,
that all people may live to praise your name;
now and for ever.
Amen.

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME AT HOME

Reflecting and meditating

Reflect on the narrative about Jesus' acceptance of the Gentile woman in Matthew 15: 21-28:

- what details in the passage catch your attention?
- what big ideas does the passage spark in your mind?
- what most touches your heart in the passage?
- what most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage?

Thinking and talking

- what do you make of the Canaanite woman addressing Jesus as 'Lord, Son of David'?
- how do you interpret Jesus' response, 'I was sent *only* to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'?
- what do you see in the sentence, 'to take the children's food and throw it to dogs'?
- how do you interpret Jesus' response, 'Woman great is your faith'?
- what does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

See how Matthew develops Mark's account of the meeting with the Gentile woman by adding the narrative concerning Jesus' first priority being the lost sheep of the house of Israel. See also the image of dogs in Luke's Gospel:

- Mark 7: 24-20
- Luke 16: 19-21

Explore attitudes toward dogs in the Old Testament:

- 1 Samuel 17: 41-43
- Psalm 59 (verses 6 and 14)

Exploring online

- explore dogs in biblical times
- explore images of barriers
- explore Jesus and the Canaanite woman in art

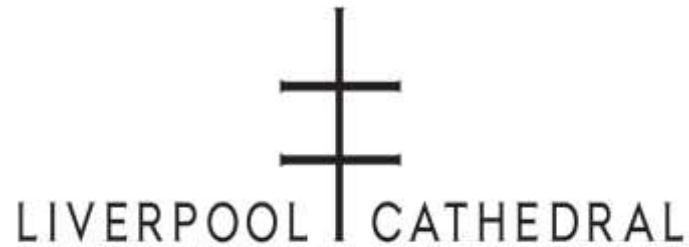
Drawing on experience

- reflect on your experience of barriers between people
- reflect on your experience of overcoming barriers between people
- reflect on what your church is doing or should do to remove barriers between people

PROPER 15 (YEAR A) SUNDAY 16 AUGUST 2020

Creating and making

- make a collage of the different physical barriers that keep people out
- make a poster that celebrates different people living and working together: Jesus dissolves barriers between people
- collect images of barriers being removed
- create a reflection, poem or prayer on the theme of removing barriers



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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 Nelson.Pike@liverpoolcathedral.org.uk

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