

## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

### CANDLES

#### EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

##### *Reflecting on the Gospel*

###### *Foolish and wise bridesmaids (Matthew 25: 1-13)*

Matthew's Gospel presents five blocks of Jesus' teaching. The first block (chapters 5, 6, 7) opens with the eight beatitudes (that we read on All Saints' Day). The beatitudes hold out God's promises of how things may go well when God's reign is welcomed. The last block (chapters 23, 24, 25) opens with the seven woes. The woes hold out the threat of how things may not go well when God's reign is rejected. Today's reading comes from that last block of teaching and illustrates the consequences of failing to take our call seriously. It is the story that contrasts the foolish and wise bridesmaids. The wise take spare oil for their lamps and the foolish do not. By the time the bridegroom arrives their lamps have gone out.

Our image to stimulate reflection on this passage is *candles*.

##### *Extracts from the Gospel passage (Matthew 25: 1-4)*

Jesus said, 'The kingdom of heaven will be like this.  
Ten bridesmaids took their lamps  
and went to meet the bridegroom.  
Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.  
When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them;  
but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.'

##### *Gospel prayer*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you welcome those  
who are prepared for your coming.  
Fill our lamps with oil that never runs out,  
that our lives may shine  
ready for your kingdom;  
for you reign for ever.  
Amen.

THE THIRD SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT (YEAR A)  
SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2020 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

**ENGAGING WITH THE THEME AT HOME**

*Reflecting and meditating*

Reflect on Jesus' message to 'keep awake' and the narrative of the bridesmaids in Matthew 25: 1-13:

- 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*

- how does this narrative about women work alongside the preceding narrative about men in Matthew 24: 45-51?
- what is the significance of the bridegroom in the narrative?
- how do you interpret the image of oil?
- how do you interpret the bridegroom's refusal to open the door?
- how should we interpret this narrative for today?

*Using your Bible*

Explore the understanding of the bridegroom and Matthew's contrast between the wise and the foolish:

- Matthew 7: 24-27
- Matthew 9: 14-15

Explore passages in the Apocrypha reflecting wisdom and light:

- Wisdom of Solomon 6: 12-16
- Wisdom of Solomon 7: 24-26

Explore passages in the Old Testament reflecting on lamps:

- Psalm 119: 105
- Psalm 132: 13-18

*Exploring online*

- explore the narrative of the ten bridesmaids
- explore Remembrance Sunday
- explore battery and electric candles (for safety)
- explore images of oil lamps

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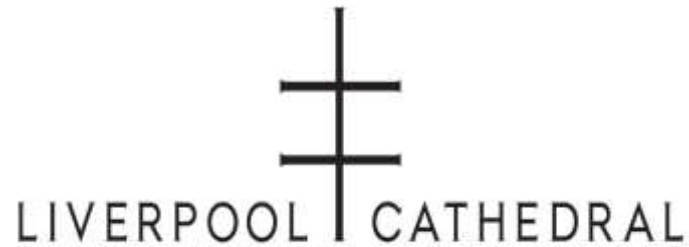
*Drawing on experience*

- reflect on your experience of Remembrance Sunday
- reflect on your experience of running out of oil
- reflect on your experience of having your lamp alight and ready

*Creating and making*

- create a poster of lamps and candles: ‘Give me oil in my lamp’
- create a collage to commemorate Remembrance Sunday
- make a display of electric candles and lamps
- create a reflection, poem, or prayer either on the narrative of the ten bridesmaids or on Remembrance Sunday

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## **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 [Nelson.Pike@liverpoolcathedral.org.uk](mailto:Nelson.Pike@liverpoolcathedral.org.uk)

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 and the St Christopher's College Trust.



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