

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY (YEAR B) SUNDAY 31 JANUARY
2021

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

JIGSAW PUZZLE

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Reflecting on the Gospel

Healing at Capernaum (Mark 1: 21-28)

In Mark's Gospel, after Jesus has called the first four disciples, he moves directly on to performing four major acts of healing. The exorcism in the synagogue at Capernaum is the first of these healings. On this occasion an unclean spirit is driven out of the man. At the same time, the unclean spirit recognises Jesus as the Holy One of God. Throughout these healings Mark is concerned to show how Jesus brings both health and wholeness to those whose lives are fragmented.

Our image to stimulate reflection on this passage is *jigsaw puzzle*.

Extracts from the Gospel passage (Mark 1: 23-26)

Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit,
and he cried out,
'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?
Have you come to destroy us?
I know who you are, the Holy One of God.'
But Jesus rebuked him, saying,
'Be silent, and come out of him!'
And the unclean spirit, throwing him into convulsions
and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.

Gospel prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
you bring healing to the sick
and wholeness to the broken.
Look with mercy on our broken lives,
so we may be made whole in you;
for you are our God.
Amen.

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READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Mark 1: 21-28

The Man with an Unclean Spirit

They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, 'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.' But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him!' And the unclean spirit, throwing him into convulsions and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, 'What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.' At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

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ENGAGING WITH THE THEME AT HOME

Reflecting and meditating

Reflect on Mark's account of the healing in the synagogue at Capernaum (Mark 1: 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

- why do you think Mark begins Jesus' work with the disciples going to the synagogue?
- what do you learn about Jesus' way of teaching from this passage?
- what do you make of the unclean spirits recognising Jesus?
- what do you make of Jesus' healing power?
- how can we best understand this narrative for today?

Using your Bible

Explore how Matthew omits this narrative following the call of the first disciples and how Luke places the narrative *before* the call:

- Matthew 4: 22-25
- Luke 4: 31-37
- Luke 5: 10

Explore how in Mark's Gospel Jesus is recognised by unclean spirits before he is recognised by his closest followers:

- Mark 5: 2-7
- Mark 8: 27-30

Exploring online

- explore wholeness and healing: Church of England
- explore commentary on Mark 1: 21-28
- explore images of jigsaw puzzles

Drawing on experience

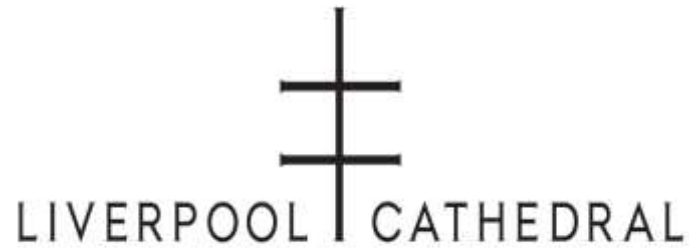
- reflect on your experiences of jigsaw puzzles
- reflect on your experiences of needing healing
- reflect on your experiences of putting the pieces together again

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Creating and making

- start doing a jigsaw puzzle
- create a collage of jigsaw puzzles
- make a poster on healing and wholeness: putting the pieces together
- create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the experience in the synagogue at Capernaum

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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

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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