

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

DARKNESS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Reflecting on the Gospel

Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus (John 3: 14-21)

Nicodemus is introduced at the beginning of chapter 3 of John's Gospel as a Pharisee and as a leader of the Jews who came to Jesus by night. Chapter 2 has closed by saying that many of those in Jerusalem for the Passover believed in Jesus because they saw the signs. Nicodemus may have been among them. He has come by night and may be walking from the darkness to meet the light that has now come into the world. For John's Gospel darkness and light, night and day, are important themes.

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

Extracts from the Gospel passage (John 3: 19-20)

And this is the judgement,
that the light has come into the world,
and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.
For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light,
so that their deeds may not be exposed.

Gospel prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
you invite us to leave the night
where we stumble in darkness
and to walk with you in the light of day.
Helps us to accept your gracious invitation,
for you are the Light of the World.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

John 3: 14-21

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.’

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME AT HOME

Reflecting and meditating

Reflect on John's account of Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus (John 3: 14-21):

- 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 do you read the significance of Nicodemus coming to Jesus by night?
- what do you understand Jesus to mean by judgement?
- what is meant by 'God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world'?
- do you hear Jesus inviting Nicodemus to come to the light?
- how can we best understand the narrative for today?

Using your Bible

Explore the two other occasions when Nicodemus is mentioned in the Gospels:

- John 7: 45-52
- John 19: 38-39

Explore the powerful interplay of darkness and light in John's Gospel:

- John 1: 1-9
- John 9: 4
- John 11: 9-10
- John 13: 27-30

Exploring online

- explore Nicodemus and Jesus
- explore The piper at the Gates of Dawn in *Wind of the Willows*
- explore images of night time

Drawing on experience

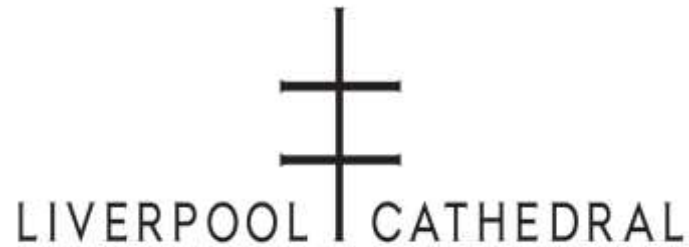
- reflect on your experiences of darkness
- reflect on your experiences of light at the end of the tunnel
- reflect on your experiences of lights being dimmed in liturgy

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (YEAR B) SUNDAY 14 MARCH 2021

Creating and making

- create a poster about Jesus meeting with Nicodemus by night
- create a collage of images of light breaking into darkness
- create a picture of Ratty and Mole rowing their boat at night
- create a reflection, poem, or prayer on darkness

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (YEAR B) SUNDAY 14 MARCH 2021



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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