

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

CHRISTMAS ADVERTS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Reflecting on the Gospel

Prepare the way (Mark 1:1-8)

The gospel reading is Mark's account of how John the Baptist prepared for the ministry of Jesus. John is portrayed as the messenger crying in the wilderness 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.' Mark's account emphasises the appearance of John dressed like Elijah in the Old Testament. Many expected Elijah to return to prepare the way for God's Messiah. There is here a note of great expectancy in the message.

Our image to stimulate reflection on this passage is *Christmas adverts*.

Extracts from the Gospel passage (Mark 1.4-6)

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness,
proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
And people from the whole Judean countryside
and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him,
and were baptized by him in the river Jordan,
confessing their sins.
Now John was clothed with camel's hair,
with a leather belt around his waist,
and he ate locusts and wild honey.

Gospel prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
with John the Baptist
we are preparing for your coming.
Teach us to see you
in every sign of Christmas around us;
for you are the meaning of Christmas.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Mark 1: 1-8

The Proclamation of John the Baptist

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,
‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight” ’,

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, ‘The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME AT HOME

Reflecting and meditating

Reflect on Mark's presentation of John the Baptist (Mark 1: 1-8):

- 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 is significant about John's message 'Prepare the way of the Lord'?
- what is significant about John's choice of clothing?
- what do you make of John's relationship with Jesus?
- how do you understand baptism with the Holy Spirit?
- what can we make of this teaching for today?

Using your Bible

Compare how Matthew and Luke develop this passage from Mark:

- Matthew 3: 1-12
- Luke 3: 2-17

Explore passages in the Old Testament on which Mark draws:

- 2 Kings 1: 8
- Isaiah 40: 3-5
- Malachi 3: 1

Exploring online

- explore images of John the Baptist
- explore John the Baptist in the Gospels
- explore Christmas adverts

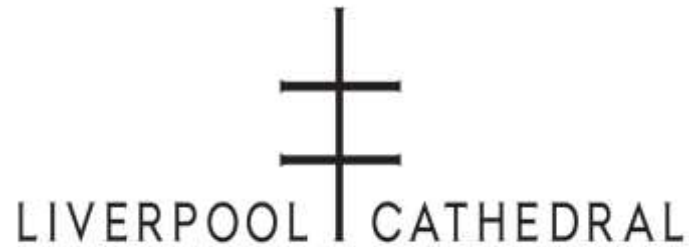
Drawing on experience

- reflect on Christmas adverts that have had an impact on you
- reflect on how your church prepares for and promotes Christmas
- reflect on how you are getting ready for Christmas

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR B) SUNDAY 6 DECEMBER 2020

Creating and making

- create a collage of Christmas adverts, placing Jesus at the centre
- create a poster to reflect how John the Baptist prepared for Jesus
- create adverts promoting Christmas at your church
- create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the Advent message of John the Baptist



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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