

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

WORLD BREADS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Feeding the five thousand (John 6:1-21)

The account of the feeding of the five thousand is one of the few narratives which John's gospel holds in common with the three synoptic gospels. Yet there are significant ways in which John's account is different. For example, according to Mark's account of the feeding of the five thousand, the disciples draw Jesus' attention to the people's hunger. In John's account Jesus initiates the conversation himself. Mark speaks simply of there being five loaves. John describes them as barley loaves. Barley was used to make bread for the poor and as grain to feed animals.

Our image to stimulate reflection on this passage is *world breads*.

Core extract from the Gospel (John 6: 10-11; for reflection throughout the week)

Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.'
Now there was a great deal of grass in the place;
so they sat down, about five thousand in all.
Then Jesus took the loaves,
and when he had given thanks,
he distributed them to those who were seated;
so also the fish, as much as they wanted.

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
you fed the five thousand people
with five loaves and two fish.
Have pity on those who go hungry,
that the food of the world
may be shared more fairly;
for you are the bread of life.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

John 6: 1-21

Feeding the Five Thousand

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?' Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.' So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.'

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

Jesus Walks on the Water

When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, got into a boat, and started across the lake to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The lake became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the lake and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.' Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land towards which they were going.

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (John 6: 1-21)

Begin exploring John's presentation of the feeding of the five thousand by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

Thinking and talking

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- What is the significance of the crowd seeing the signs that Jesus did?
- What is the significance of five loaves and twelve baskets?
- Why did the people want to make Jesus King?
- Why did Jesus escape again to the mountain?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

Explore the differences between John's account of the feeding of the five thousand, and the accounts of the three synoptic gospels.

- Matthew 14: 13-21
- Mark 6: 30-44
- Luke 9: 10-17

Explore images of feeding crowds in the Old Testament.

- Numbers 11: 13, 21-22
- 2 Kings 4: 42-44

Proper 12 (Year B) Sunday 25 July 2021

Exploring online

Widen your exploration of John's presentation of the feeding of the five thousand by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Commentaries on John 6: 1-15
- Feeding of the five thousand in classic art
- World breads

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on John's presentation of the feeding of the five thousand is *world breads*. Draw on your own experience of different breads. For example:

- What breads do you most like?
- Have you experience of baking bread?
- Have you experience of large outdoor communion services?

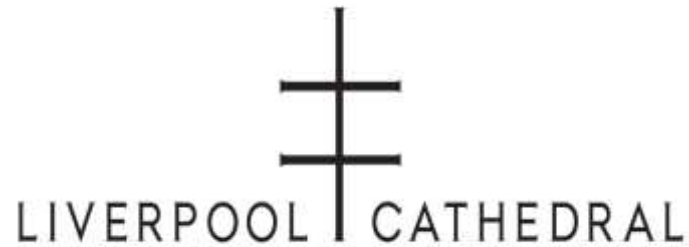
What have you learned about bread?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by John's narrative of the feeding of the five thousand.

- Make a collage of world breads.
- Bake bread in different shapes.
- Make a poster of Jesus feeding the five thousand.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of bread.

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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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