**EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME**

**AMBITION**

**EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY’S THEME**

***Introducing the Gospel***

*The Messiah who suffers (Mark 9: 30-37)*

Once Peter has recognised and confessed Jesus as the Messiah, Mark begins a programme of teaching about the nature of Jesus’ Messiahship. Jesus is the Messiah who suffers. Peter’s confession is followed immediately by the first prediction of Jesus’ suffering and death. Now in today’s Gospel reading Mark offers a second more detailed prediction. This view of Messiahship reverses the common expectation for a triumphal Messiah. Such a reversal must change the disciples’ hopes for themselves as well, and reshape their ambitions. In place of power they find weakness.

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

***Core extract from the Gospel (Mark 9: 33-36; for reflection throughout the week)***

Then they came to Capernaum;

and when he was in the house he asked them,

‘What were you arguing about on the way?’

But they were silent,

for on the way they had argued with one another

who was the greatest.

He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them,

‘Whoever wants to be first

must be last of all and servant of all.’

Then he took a little child and put it among them.

***Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)***

Lord Jesus Christ,

you call your followers

to give service to others

and not to seek power for themselves.

Help us to live up to our calling,

that our lives may witness to you;

now and always.

Amen.

**READING NEXT SUNDAY’S GOSPEL**

**Mark 9: 30-37**

**Jesus Again Foretells His Death and Resurrection**

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, ‘The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.’ But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

**Who Is the Greatest?**

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, ‘What were you arguing about on the way?’ But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, ‘Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.’ Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.’

**ENGAGING WITH THE THEME**

***Dwelling with the text (Mark 9: 30-37)***

Begin exploring Mark’s programme of teaching about the nature of Jesus’ Messiahship 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 are the key points concerning Jesus’ predictions of his death?
* Why were the disciples arguing?
* How does Jesus deal with this conflict:
* What is the point of bringing the child into the narrative?
* What does this narrative say for us today?

***Using your Bible***

Place the three predictions in Mark of Jesus’ death side by side.

* Mark 8: 31-32
* Mark 9: 31-32
* Mark 10: 32-34

Compare parallel passages in Matthew and Luke.

* Matthew 18: 1-5
* Luke 9: 46-48

Explore ambition and humility in the Old Testament.

* Psalm 25: 8-9
* Proverbs 15: 33
* Micah 6: 8

***Exploring online***

Widen your exploration of Mark’s programme of teaching about the nature of Jesus’ Messiahship by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

* Jesus’ predictions of his passion
* Christianity and ambition
* Discipleship and humility

***Drawing on experience***

The image to stimulate reflection on Mark’s programme of teaching about the nature of Jesus’ Messiahship is *ambition.* Draw on your own experience of ambition. For example:

* When have you experienced ambition and humility in others?
* When have you experienced ambition and humility in yourself?
* When have you experienced ambition and humility in the Church?

What have you learned about ambition and humility?

***Creating and making***

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Mark’s programme of teaching about the nature of Jesus’ Messiahship.

* Create a poster profiling the three Marcan predictions of Jesus’ death
* Create a collage that profiles ambition.
* Create a collage that profiles humility.
* Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of ambition or humility.



**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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