**EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME**

**WEDDING RECEPTION**

**EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY’S THEME**

***Introducing the Gospel***

*Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11)*

John’s account of the wedding at Cana comes immediately after the first disciples follow Jesus. When wine runs out, Jesus replenishes the supply. In verse 11 John explains why he starts with this story: it ‘is the first of the signs by which Jesus revealed his glory and led his disciples to believe in him’. It is no accident that the first *sign* takes place at a wedding feast. In Jewish thought the wedding feast is a way of speaking about God's kingdom, when the Messiah will preside at the banquet.

The image to stimulate reflection on John’s account of the wedding at Cana is *wedding reception.*

***Core extract from the Gospel (John 2: 1-11; for reflection throughout the week)***

There was a wedding in Cana of Galilee,

and the mother of Jesus was there.

Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.

When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him,

‘They have no wine.’

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

Lord Jesus Christ,

you were welcomed to the wedding at Cana.

Make us ready to be welcomed

to the feast in your kingdom;

for you are our God.

Amen.

**READING NEXT SUNDAY’S GOSPEL**

**John 2: 1-11**

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.’ His mother said to the servants, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’ Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the jars with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, ‘Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.’ So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, ‘Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.’ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

**ENGAGING WITH THE THEME**

***Dwelling with the text (John 2: 1-11)***

Begin to explore John’s account of the wedding at Cana 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.

* How do you interpret the priority given to the mother of Jesus in the narrative?
* How do you read the conversation between Jesus and his mother?
* How do you understand the comment about the quality of the wine?
* What is the significance of the reference to this being the first of Jesus’ signs?
* What does this narrative say for us today?

***Using your Bible***

Trace the importance of signs in John’s Gospel.

* John 4: 46-54
* John 20: 30-31

Trace the importance of the wedding feast in the synoptic Gospels.

* Matthew 22: 1-10
* Luke 14: 7-11

Explore images of wine in the Old Testament.

* Psalm 104: 14-15
* Isaiah 25: 6

***Exploring online***

Widen your exploration of John’s account of the wedding at Cana by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

* Wedding at Cana
* Signs in John’s Gospel
* History of wedding receptions

***Drawing on experience***

The image to stimulate reflection on John’s narrative concerning the wedding at Cana is *wedding reception.* Draw on your own experience of wedding receptions. For example:

* What have been your best experiences of wedding receptions?
* How would you wish to arrange a wedding reception?
* What have you recalled from sermons on the wedding at Cana?

What have you learned about wedding receptions?

***Creating and making***

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by John’s narrative concerning the wedding at Cana.

* Create a collage of wedding receptions and wedding venues.
* Create a poster celebrating the wedding at Cana.
* Create a display of wine bottles (or adverts for wine).
* Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of the wedding at Cana.



**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 smc.lesliefrancis@gmail.com.

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.



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