

**CELEBRATING BIBLE SUNDAY  
IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
4TH DECEMBER 2016**

WELCOME

*'Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ  
has welcomed you, for the glory of God'  
(Romans 15:7)*



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE  
OF ENGLAND AND WALES

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# *Bible Sunday - Welcome One Another*

Dear Friends in Christ,

*Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*

**Roman 15: 7**

As Christmas approaches we will all spend more and more time preparing the hospitality that is to be offered family and friends as they join us to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. That spirit of hospitality has its roots way back in the history of nomadic peoples and the Bible has conserved many texts that witness to this fact. For the Jewish people, hospitality was not just a way of showing benevolence to those in need of refreshment, nor of welcome to the stranger, but a means of expressing the nation's vocation of the salvation of all peoples. It is on the mountain of the Lord that a great banquet is prepared for all peoples; and the glory of the Lord provides shade and refuge (cf. Isaiah 25:6, 4:6). Like the requirement of charity, hospitality received a new dimension in the New Testament. At the Last Supper, Jesus chose a rite of hospitality, the washing of the feet as a sign of blessedness in its doing.

Pope Francis asks that we be a Church that does not just welcome and receive by keeping the doors open, but one that finds new ways; that is able to step outside itself and go out to welcome the stranger. Powered by the living word within us, audacious and courageous we can go to the refugees and exiles, the homeless and hungry, the unemployed and those who have lost hope, those who have left our communities or are indifferent and invite them to find that peace and life that comes from knowing you are truly welcome. Now it is the author of the Letter to the Hebrews who encourages us further when he writes:

*Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*

**Hebrews 13:1-2**

At the beginning of a new year in the life of the Church experience afresh for yourselves the welcome that Jesus gives through the Bible readings you hear in the Liturgy or read in the silence of your own homes; nourished by them invite another to share the life that Jesus gives abundantly and bestows on all who welcome him.

Please accept my invitation to use for yourself, your family and your parish the passages from the Bible and easy to use resources to help you not just on Bible Sunday, or Advent but throughout this liturgical year in which we hear much of St. Matthew's Gospel. I commend them to you, confident they will help you to respond to the invitation of Jesus as well as to extend his welcome to all.

I am grateful to members of the Scripture Working Group for their contributions to this booklet. These contributions can be found at:

[cbcew.org.uk/sacred-scripture](http://cbcew.org.uk/sacred-scripture)

Any time we hear the Word of God...

The Body and Blood of Christ is being poured into our ears...

The Divine Word is exceedingly rich, containing within itself every delight.

**Saint Jerome**

May you know the blessings of God in the hearing of his Word.  
With all good wishes,



The Rt Rev'd Peter M. Brignall  
Bishop of Wrexham

Dear Friends,

A very warm welcome from Bible Society on the occasion of Bible Sunday 2016.

We are delighted to offer you this resource pack created in partnership with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, with contributions from a number of our friends and co-workers supporting scriptural engagement in the Catholic community.

During Advent each year, the cycle of Scripture and prayer invites us to pray for openness to God's Word. The theme for this Bible Sunday pack is *Welcome One Another* (Romans 15:7), and you will find here Scripture focused materials that help each of us to extend welcome to one another, and indeed to welcome Christ, the Word of God, into our lives in a new way during this special season.

I'm struck at this time by the recent words of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* that '[the study of the Sacred Scriptures must be a door opened to every believer](#)'. At Bible Society, we want to enable every man, woman and child to engage with the Bible in ways that are appropriate to them. By opening the door of the Scriptures in an intentional way this Bible Sunday, together we can demonstrate the generous welcome we find every day in God's word.

In addition to the other resources available in this pack, I'd like to personally invite you to engage with some of Bible Society's initiatives:

- If you would like to undertake a digital Bible and Social Justice daily challenge throughout Advent, why not sign up to our [#AdventChallenge](#)?
- Or for more ideas to inspire children in your parish, school or local community this Christmas, why not get hold of our beautiful free Christmas story booklets?

You can find out more about these initiatives by visiting [biblesociety.org.uk/Christmas](http://biblesociety.org.uk/Christmas)

Wishing you God's blessing as you seek to welcome God's Word in a new way this Bible Sunday.



Paul Williams  
Chief Executive, Bible Society



# *Bible Sunday - Homily Notes*

## **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**Isaiah 11:1-10 Psalm 72 Romans 15:4-9 Matthew 3:1-12**

On Bible Sunday this year, the Second Sunday of Advent, we are treated to one of the great messianic poems of the prophet Isaiah. The Messiah is a new gift of the line of David. This Messiah is Spirit-filled. The origins of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are seen here. The Messiah brings justice in his dealings with all, and particularly with the little ones and with the poor. The powerful and the wicked are brought down. The world is transformed, and creation is at peace. The Messiah from the stock of Jesse, father of David, is a signal for all nations.

In the turmoil of today's world, with widespread movement of peoples, often due to war, and conflict in so many places, as nations build barbed-wire fences and walls, God's word suggests a new and better way.

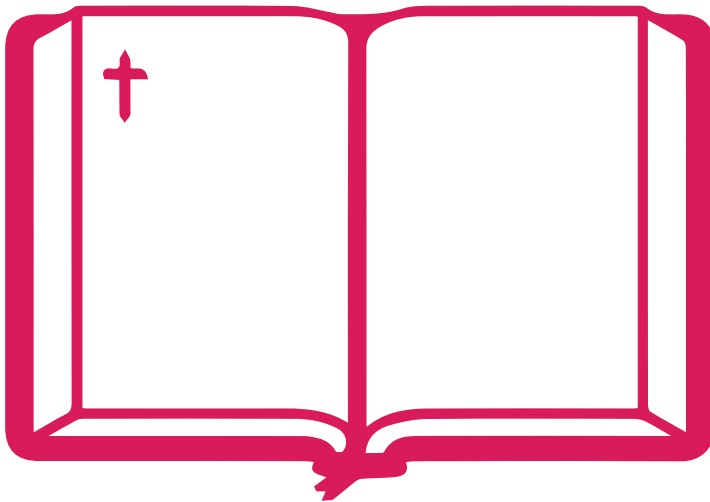
The psalm which follows the first reading is also a messianic text. It speaks of God's anointed king. The word 'justice' is heard repeatedly. God's Messiah will rule 'from sea to sea, from the Great River to the earth's bounds'. Echoing what the prophet said, the psalmist declares that the Messiah will care for the poor, the needy and the weak.

In the reading from the Letter to the Romans St Paul affirms that the Scriptures are given to us as a source of hope. God helps those who believe the Gospel to persevere in following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. God's promise is made to both Jew and Gentile. This is Paul's crucial insight. Christ comes for all people, of all faiths, of all nations. The longings of the prophets of Israel are thus fulfilled.

The gospel reading from Matthew chapter 3 demonstrates the truth of what St Paul writes. The dreams of God's holy people, voiced by the prophets, are fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah. St Matthew announces the first stage of this fulfilment: the arrival of the precursor, who will prepare the way for the Lord. John the Baptist welcomes all and challenges most particularly those who rely on status rather than God's mercy.

To those who say 'We have Abraham for our father' John insists that they produce the fruit appropriate to repentance. Change of heart means allowing the light of God's word to penetrate the heart and the mind leading to greater commitment to live by the word of the gospel. It is the Messiah foreseen by John the Baptist who will extend the gift of the Holy Spirit to all those who believe so that true justice may be established on earth.

Fr Adrian Graffy,  
Chair, Scripture Working Group  
Member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission



## *Bible Sunday - The Prophet Isaiah at Advent and Christmas*

For Christians the prophet Isaiah is clearly associated with the season of Advent and the feasts of Christmas. On each Sunday of Advent in Year A the first reading at Mass is from Isaiah. The weekday first readings at Mass for the first part of Advent are always taken from Isaiah. The first readings for the Masses of Christmas Day and the Epiphany are from Isaiah. These readings have been associated with the coming of Christ in the prayer of the Church for many centuries, and are taken from this massive book of sixty-six chapters, a book which originates from several prophets and from several historical settings. As we welcome the Messiah, we welcome the word of God delivered to God's prophets.

The Isaiah phenomenon begins with the young temple servant called Isaiah, the son of Amoz, who around 740 BC received a vision of God in the temple. The vision is recounted in chapter 6 of the book. It disturbed him profoundly, yet his response was 'Here I am, send me!' (6:9) He was willing to welcome God's word, and to preach it, whatever the outcome. The life of the prophet is dominated by speaking God's word, the word he must first receive in his heart and then proclaim. It is impressed upon him that the word he preaches will not be welcomed (6:10). He is to remain steadfast and faithful even if the word is rejected.

Justice (Hebrew mishpat) and righteousness (tsedaqah) are major themes, while peace (shalom) is the final goal of his preaching, the final gift of God. 'Nation will not lift sword against nation, there will be no more training for war.' (2:5) When he speaks of the coming of God's Messiah he is well aware that justice is urgently needed for the poor and the oppressed. The child to be born for us will establish the throne of David in justice and righteousness (9:6). 'He judges the wretched with integrity, and with equity gives a verdict for the poor of the land.' (11:4).

But for justice to be established the people must change, welcoming the word of God and working with it. Isaiah's contemporaries must change their ways. The word of God has continued to challenge the people of God

through the centuries. Yet the response both then and now has often been weak. Isaiah speaks of God who cultivates a vineyard with great care and attention, waiting for it to give a harvest of fine grapes. Yet sour grapes are all it gives (5:2). God awaits justice but there is nothing but turmoil, righteousness but only cries of distress are heard (5:7).

The fundamental insights of the prophet Isaiah form the basis for a developing tradition. In a later chapter we hear of a 'delightful vineyard' (27:2). God's care and protection are guaranteed. 'Every moment I water the vineyard, for fear its leaves should fall.' (27:3) Peace is once again the ultimate goal.

From chapter 40 of the Book of Isaiah it is clear that we are in a different historical setting. The words of a new prophet, inspired to comfort a people now in exile, are collected and added to the Isaiah tradition. 'Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low.' (40:3-4) After deportation and the destruction of Jerusalem the people of God have spent decades in exile in Babylon. But this new prophet announces a new start. God will lead the people home. 'The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God remains for ever.' (40:8) This call to prepare for God's coming assumes new meaning with the preaching of John the Baptist. The New Testament writers see this prophetic text as fulfilled when the Messiah comes.

Further chapters of the Book of Isaiah reflect the preparation for the return home and the early years back in the land of Israel. God, now revealed as creator and lord of history, is both willing and able to bring about a restoration. As the tide of history turns, Persian rulers adopt a more benign policy towards conquered nations than that of their Babylonian predecessors. The Persian king Cyrus is even dignified with the title of God's 'anointed' (45:1).

God inspires prophets and kings to work for the good of their people. In particular, in this part of the Book of Isaiah, there emerges the figure of the 'servant'. The servant, upheld by God, brings true justice to the nations (42:4). The servant, called from his mother's womb, will become a light for the nations (49:6). The servant, whose preaching leads to persecution, insults and spittle, trusts in God's vindication (50:8). The servant, who forfeits his life, will justify many, taking their faults on himself (53:12). This servant is never identified by the prophet, but Christians with the help of these texts identify Jesus of Nazareth as the true servant of the Lord.

Throughout the centuries the prophets urge people to welcome the word of God, which always achieves its purpose: 'Yes, as the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.' (55:10-11)

A vision of a restored Jerusalem dominates the final chapters of the book. The light of the Lord shines for the peoples of the earth. A rebuilt Jerusalem attracts people to come and to discover the true God of all nations. The city of God, whose people have suffered trauma and destruction, will be given a new name: 'No longer are you to be named 'forsaken', nor your land 'abandoned', but you shall be called 'my delight' and your land 'the wedded'; for the Lord takes delight in you and your land will have its wedding.' (62:4)

A mighty prophetic tradition, built up over centuries, continues to inspire both Jew and Christian to welcome the word of God and to live by it.

Fr Adrian Graffy,  
Chair, Scripture Working Group  
Member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission



# *Bible Sunday - Supporting Readers*

To help Ministers of Reading prepare spiritually here are some pointers and general guidance.

## **SPIRITUAL PREPARATION: CONNECTING WITH THE WORD**

Spiritual preparation involves understanding the text, so as to connect with the Word.

We need to reflect on the three contexts of the Word:

- Scriptural (where it comes in the Bible)
- Liturgical (where it comes in the Mass)
- Lectionary (where it comes in the Church's cycle of readings)

We also need to understand what the text is saying to us today: in prayer.

All the readings at Mass come from the Bible. It is essential for those who proclaim Scripture at Mass to understand and love the Bible - so that they help those who listen to understand that it is the story of our life.

The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist are the two main components of Mass. The General Introduction to the Lectionary (GIL) states how they are related:

'The Church is nourished spiritually at the table of God's word and at the table of the Eucharist: from the one it grows in wisdom and from the other in holiness. In the word of God the divine covenant is announced; in the Eucharist the new and everlasting covenant is renewed. The spoken word of God brings to mind the history of salvation; the Eucharist embodies it in the sacramental signs of the liturgy.'

- The gospel is the highpoint: for this the other readings prepare the assembly.
- The reader has an important role in encouraging reflective silence.
- The General Intercessions need to be prepared and delivered with the same care as the readings.

We use two books during Mass:

- a) the Roman Missal = the prayers said by priest and people;
- b) the Lectionary = extracts taken from books of the Bible, organised for use during Mass throughout the liturgical year.

Please follow this link to see more information about this ministry:

[liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Scripture/Ministry.pdf](http://liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Scripture/Ministry.pdf)

# *Bible Sunday - Engaging children with the Scriptures*

Many parishes offer a Liturgy of the Word with Children as part of weekly worship. There are varied and excellent resources available for supporting this ministry. Catholic Bible Sunday can also provide a great opportunity to encourage all parents to make a habit of sharing the Scriptures with their children. Here are some ideas and principles that you might find useful:

## **1. MAKE TIME TO SHARE THE SCRIPTURES**

Scripture can become part of a regular conversation between you and your child but it won't just happen. You need to make space for it and look out for opportunities during the day or week to share and talk about the Scriptures with your child. For younger children, you could try to include the Bible as a bedtime story and for older ones who read to themselves at bedtime, why not consider buying them a children's version of the Bible appropriate to their age?

Talk about the Bible stories at important feast times (Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Ascension, Lent etc.). Ask the children about the Bible stories they heard at school in Assembly or in their R.E. lessons. Talk about the school liturgies they have experienced.

All of this helps to keep Scripture alive as a topic of conversation and reflection in a family.

## **2. MAKE THEM RELEVANT TO TODAY**

It is really important that you help your child to explore what the stories mean for us today. Without this, the stories remain just that – stories. As you read about the teachings of Jesus, for example, then ask yourselves – what is this telling me today? What is Jesus asking me to do today? Don't be afraid that you do not have enough knowledge - Jesus taught in very simple terms. His message was straightforward. So if, e.g., you are reading the story of the feeding of the 5000, then maybe you talk to your child about Holy Communion today and about sharing just as the boy in the story did, just as Jesus did. If the story is from the Old Testament such as Daniel in the lion's den, then perhaps you talk about bravery and trusting in God.

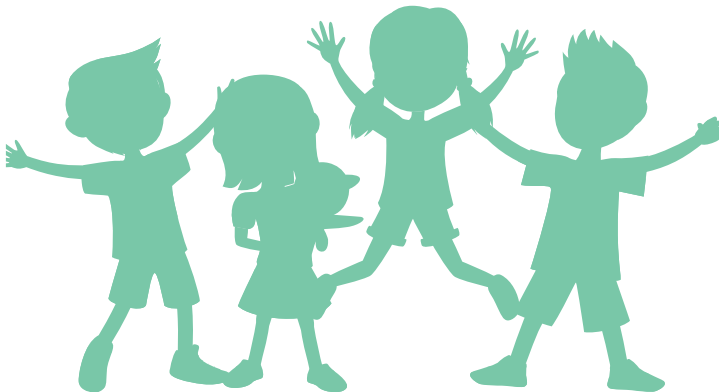
### 3. PICK UP ON SYMBOLS

Having symbols or pictures around your home will help to remind you and them of Bible stories. A simple crucifix, statue or image can provide a topic of conversation. If you decorate your house for Christmas, Easter or other times, include religious symbols as part of your tradition (e.g. Christmas Tree decorations, a crib or an Easter Garden).

Jesus used everyday things when he taught the disciples so you can use everyday things too to remind your children about the teachings of Jesus and Bible stories e.g. planting flowers could lead to a discussion about creation, serving bread might remind you of sharing the bread at the last supper or in the feeding of the 5000, filling the bath with water could give you opportunity to talk about Baptism and the Baptism of Jesus.

### 4. SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Particularly for younger children, don't be afraid of retelling Bible stories very simply. Pick out the parts that they will relate to. This may mean missing some of the detail, but will introduce them to the basic elements. From here, you can paint additional 'colours' of detail and character upon retelling. Initially, though, think in 'headlines' rather than in paragraphs.





## **5. LOOK FOR VISUALLY STIMULATING MATERIALS**

Children are growing up in an image-saturated world. The stories they read are often highly visual in their presentation. Younger children are used to stories which illustrate each section with a picture, rather than just one picture for a whole story, so find Bible story books like this. Most children's Bibles tend to have one or two pictures per story. You could use these pictures as a starting point to re-tell the story.

## **6. FIND STORIES WITH ELEMENTS CHILDREN CAN RELATE TO**

The Bible is a very complex set of different books and there are some parts of it that will prove very stretching for children. As they grow up, children will eventually discover every aspect of the Bible's content. Liturgy of the Word with Children will help introduce them to many stories over the course of the years but to develop their interest when they are young, maybe choose stories about children or young people: Jesus lost in the Temple, the Feeding of the 5,000, David and Goliath, Jeremiah's call and the Annunciation. Or you could begin with animals – Noah and the Flood, Daniel in the Lion's Den, Jonah and the Great Fish, the Bethlehem Stable and the Good Shepherd.

Many older children love to discover stories about adventure, daring and danger – the Book of Judges is full of this! You can also find interesting re-written Bible stories for older children which focus on the more adventurous stories in the vein of 'Horrible Histories'.

Consider too that many Bible stories are focused on men (for lots of different reasons). It can be good for all children to read those stories focused on women too – try the books of Ruth, Esther, Judith; or Miriam (in Exodus) and Mary (through the Gospels).

## **7. CHOOSE AN UNDERSTANDABLE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE**

While some Catholic children's Bibles do not always follow the exact format of a traditional or standard Bible, there is no harm in staying with these when reading with your children at home. You are trying to engender a love of Scripture and God's Word in them and this will not happen if they do not understand what they are reading and it becomes a chore rather than a pleasure. Catholic children's Bibles are written so that children will enjoy them.

You can try the Good News Translation which is particularly written with simpler language and images but don't feel unable to use the most suitable translation for your age groups. Older children can discover more accurate translations (such as the Jerusalem and New Jerusalem Bibles and the New Revised Standard Version) as they grow more confident with reading.

Format is also important. For younger children, find short stories with lots of images; for older children, there are many 'youth Bibles' and special re-tellings which have been adapted with children in mind. Catholic publishers and wider Christian publishers will stock many of these and feature them online.

## 8. GROW IN YOUR OWN KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING!

Finally, of course it really does help if we have some basic familiarity with Bible stories ourselves before we share them with children and that we have an understanding of their message for us today. Retelling and discussing the stories with children is an excellent way of growing in our own understanding and confidence. And don't worry if your child asks a difficult question – this is something worth celebrating because it means they're engaging with the story! You can always say you're not sure of the answer, but you will try to find out together.

If you would like to grow in your familiarity with the Bible, Wednesday Word has many suggestions online of resources to help you, available at [wednesdayword.org/](http://wednesdayword.org/)



# *Bible Sunday - Children's Liturgy Ideas*

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR A

**Gospel Reading: Matthew 3:1-12**

### LITURGY OF THE WORD WITH CHILDREN IDEAS:

4th December 2016

Second Sunday of Advent Year A

Gospel Reading: Matthew 3:1-12

### KIT LIST:

At least one stone for each person and enough to create what looks like a path. Stones should ideally be large enough to feel slightly heavy but comfortable to hold in a child's hand.

Bowl of water or a Holy Water stoup.

### FOCUS:

Preparing ourselves for Jesus' return.

### SET UP:

Alongside whatever you would normally set up visually for the children. Create a winding 'path' of stones (see Kit List).

### INTRODUCTION:

(Start as usual but you may want to delay your Penitential Rite until after the Gospel today).

Introductory activity on preparing

- In two's and three's (or as a whole group) ask the children how they would prepare for the following things, what would they need to do?
  - Going on holiday
  - Going to school
  - For a birthday party
  - Going to the beach / swimming
  - If the Queen was coming to visit

- Ask the children for their ideas and help them to recognise all the different steps they have to take to get ready (prepare) for each different thing.
- Help the children to think and talk about how they might feel about the different events.
- Remind the children that Advent is a time to prepare for Christmas, when we remember that God came down from heaven to be with us as baby Jesus, and also, we prepare for when Jesus will return from heaven.

## GOSPEL READING:

Read the Gospel with the children as you normally would.

Having read the whole story, read again the first few verses to the end of the prophecy from Isaiah. Then ask the children what is wrong with the path of stones you have made? They should notice that the path is not straight. Ask someone to straighten the path of stones.

Ask the children if they can remember what John said to the people at the beginning of the story. 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.'

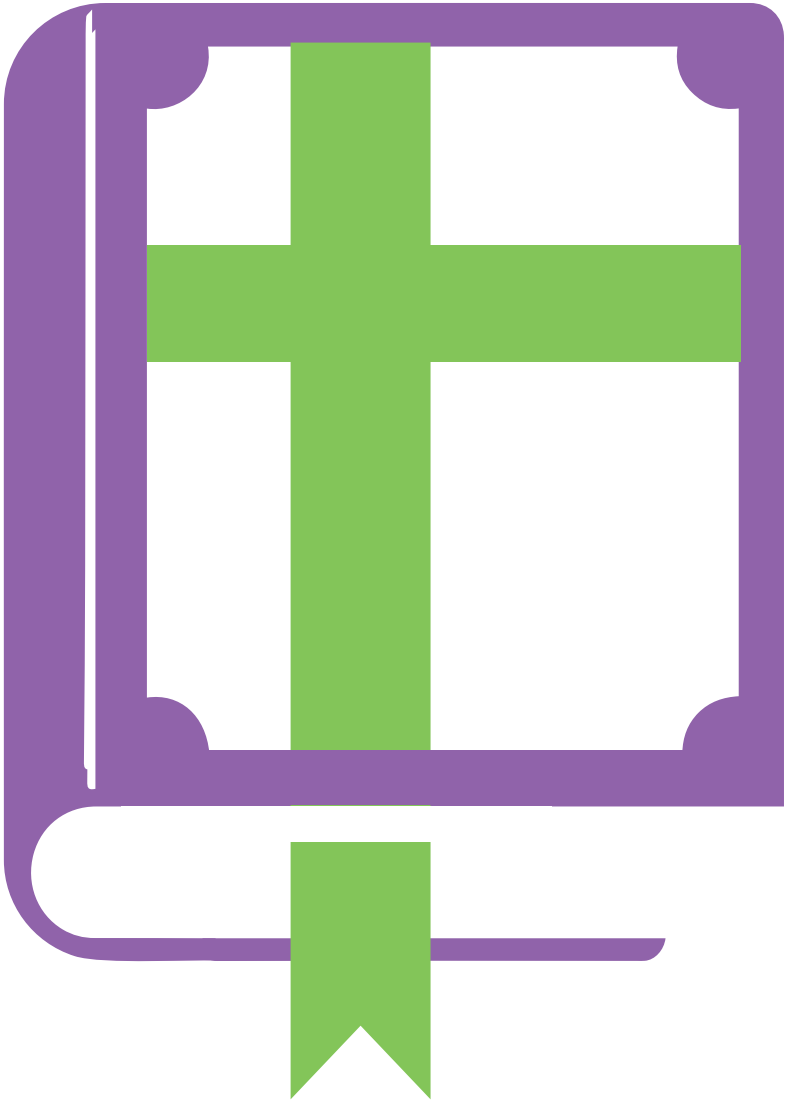
- Ask the children if they know what that means.
- Remind the children that to repent means to 'feel sorry' for things we have done wrong. Sometimes when we talk about how we feel when we have done something wrong, we talk about it as a heavy weight we are carrying. Perhaps like a stone we have to carry around with us. Invite the children forward and each to take a stone and hold it gently in their hands.
- Ask them to think about their sins, the things they have done wrong, and imagine that the stone is a symbol of the weight of their sins.
- Ask the children to pray quietly to God and ask for God's mercy and forgiveness.
- After a time of quiet ask the children, one by one to place their stone in the bowl of water gently. Remind them that the water reminds us of our baptism and we use water as a symbol of our hearts being cleaned for God.
- To end the reflection you might simply use the second form of the Penitential Act as a prayer, the text is drawn from the Psalms: 'Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned against you. Show us, O Lord, your mercy, and grant us your salvation. Amen.'

## INTERCESSIONS:

As part of your time of intercession you may like to pray for each person in your group by asking each one to come forward to the Holy Water stoup/bowl and dipping their fingers in the water and making the sign of the cross. As each person comes forward you can pray a simple prayer like, 'Remember [name] that Jesus is very close to you.'

**Catholic Bible School - [catholic-bible-school.org](http://catholic-bible-school.org)**





# *Bible Sunday - Social action ideas*

## **THEME: WELCOME ONE ANOTHER (ROMANS 15:7)**

When we reflect on how we might welcome one another – in our parish, our wider community and at the national level we see that there are three aspects that we are called to fulfil. These are: welcoming, belonging and ownership.

Welcoming - recognition and acceptance of the other as different, and the showing of hospitality in a way that understands and accepts this difference as being positive.

Belonging - establishing of relationships across difficult cultural boundaries.

Ownership - encouraging and helping individuals and communities to recognise, affirm and celebrate the gifts of others.

These three aspects are important in all relationships, be these in our wider families, schools, churches, workplaces, public spaces and in our understanding of the national political structures in which we live.

Our faith in God, who is present in all of human history, in the most wonderful as well as tragic circumstances encourages us to promote a set of values in our welcome of one another: compassion, hope, dignity, solidarity, hospitality, justice and participation.

To model these values to all whom we meet, whenever and wherever we are able to meet them is intrinsic to our faith in practice.

This month how might I welcome other people...

In my home?

In my school?

In my parish?

In my job?

In my neighbourhood?

In my prayer life?

In my leisure time?

At the end of this month reflect on who you welcomed and how you showed some of the values intrinsic to our faith.

Did this give you any insights into yourself?

Did it help you to understand why the Scriptures place so much importance on hospitality?

## PRAYER

*God of all ages,*

*As we welcome you this Christmas,  
we welcome you with joyful hearts.*

*We belong to you,  
and trust in you;*

*may we serve you in the welcome we give to others,  
and in the love we share in your name.*

*Amen.*

Fleur Dorrell  
Bible Society





## *Bible Sunday - Prayers of the faithful*

You may like to choose from a selection of prayers provided below in support of your parish's promotion of Bible Sunday.

### **PRIEST:**

*Today we celebrate Catholic Bible Sunday and this year our theme is: '**Welcome one another**'. The Bible has a great deal to say about welcoming one another so we are encouraged to read the Bible often and give thanks for the gift of welcome.*

### **READER:**

As we await the coming of Jesus this Advent, let us welcome him into our hearts and welcome the good news that he brings.  
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

### **READER:**

We pray for all migrants and refugees, who this year, have travelled in extraordinary conditions to find safety and sanctuary. May we welcome those we meet with kindness and love.  
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

### **READER:**

We pray for our parish community, that we would be renewed in our love of the Scriptures. May we share this love of God's word in our families, friendships and neighbourhood.  
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

### **READER:**

We pray for all those who have never heard the Gospel. May we be joyful witnesses to the Gospel to whoever we meet this week.  
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

**READER:**

We pray for our wider society and changing times. That the Scriptures would inspire and guide all those with political responsibility, those who educate our children and all those who work in public life.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

**READER:**

We pray for all people struggling with poverty, debt, homelessness and unemployment. May the Scriptures give them hope as they try to find ways to live in difficult circumstances.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We bring to the Lord our own intentions in a moment of silence.

**PRIEST:**

*Loving Father, you sent your Son Jesus Christ to save us from death.*

*During this Advent season, may our hearts welcome you afresh and may we read the Scriptures with renewed devotion.*

*We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

*Amen.*

Fleur Dorrell  
Bible Society



# Matthew's Gospel

Chapter 1 - Free Sample



A resource book  
for small groups  
and individuals  
wanting to study  
and pray with  
Matthew's Gospel

Catholic  
**Bible**  
School

# *Bible Sunday - Catholic Bible School*

This *Matthew's Gospel* resource book is ideal for small groups and individuals who want to go deeper with the story of Jesus that Matthew tells. Packed with interesting Bible commentary, thought-provoking questions for discussion and reflection, ideas for prayer and group activities it appeals to a wide cross-section of people. No prior knowledge of the Gospel is needed to access the depth of the teaching and reflection as the whole Gospel is covered in this eight week programme, there are even short video commentaries for group to watch and discuss as part of the programme.

The *Matthew's Gospel* resource book is well laid out with an easy to follow guide for people who want to explore it all and for those who simply want to dip into the material. The sessions – put together by the Directors of the Catholic Bible School, Sarah and David Beresford – are well written in clear accessible language and with a straightforward structure. At only £6 a copy this is your essential resource for the coming liturgical year. This resource can help you to grow in your love and understanding of the person of Jesus.

Here's the link to the page to buy the Resource Book.

[catholic-bible-school.org/shop/matthews-gospel-resource-book](http://catholic-bible-school.org/shop/matthews-gospel-resource-book)

Here's the link to the Sample chapter:

[catholic-bible-school.org/shop/mgsample](http://catholic-bible-school.org/shop/mgsample)

## ***Bible Sunday - Helpful links and further information***

Here you will find links for exploring Scripture more deeply. While we have tried to ensure the suitability of these sites, please be aware that content on third-party websites may not necessarily express the views of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

[biblesociety.org.uk](http://biblesociety.org.uk)

[catholic-bible-school.org](http://catholic-bible-school.org)

[cbcew.org.uk/sacred-scripture-links](http://cbcew.org.uk/sacred-scripture-links)

[liturgyoffice.org.uk/](http://liturgyoffice.org.uk/)

[wednesdayword.org/](http://wednesdayword.org/)

[whatgoodnews.org/](http://whatgoodnews.org/)

[ssg.org.uk/](http://ssg.org.uk/)

**FOR BIBLE SOCIETY ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS RESOURCES VISIT:**  
[biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/christmas/](http://biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/christmas/)

### **SIGN-UP FOR 'THE WORD OF THE LORD' NEWSLETTER**

You can sign up for 'The Word of the Lord' an email newsletter brought to you by the Scripture Working Group at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

This newsletter comes out six times a year.

In this newsletter you'll find updates of news, events, resources and developments which we hope you'll find beneficial for your continued engagement with the Bible - whether individually, as a family, as a parish community, or to share the Scriptures more broadly.

You can subscribe here and opt-out at any time:

[cbcew.org.uk/sacred-scripture-newsletter](http://cbcew.org.uk/sacred-scripture-newsletter)



Catholic Bible Sunday resources are offered by the Scripture Working Group, an instrument of the Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The work of the Group is supported by **Bible Society**.