

Secrets of the kingdom

Notes on the Bible readings

- This week's Gospel reading is a selection of Jesus' descriptions of what God's kingdom is like; each one is a pictorial image. The first two images are of very small items: mustard seed, showing that what flourishes from the seed is what is important; and yeast, used to demonstrate again the way the kingdom starts small but has a mighty and wide-ranging effect.

- The next two are examples of expense and worth, used not as a morality tale but as a teaching point, to direct the reader to consider the huge value of the kingdom in comparison with anything else life might offer.

- And finally, the image of a net that scoops up everyone. It speaks of the separation of good from evil that will happen at the end of the age, and of the persistence of evil until then.

- Both Old Testament readings express a longing to know God's will. Jesus speaks of the kingdom, rule, or will of God being accessible to those who seek it. The kingdom of God is on offer to people of all genders, classes, cultures, ages and levels of faith; is this the message we proclaim in our church communities?

Images of the kingdom

Make a collage that represents the kingdom of heaven. You could use pieces of magazine or newspaper, fabric, pens, coloured paper or card, etc.

Questions for reflection

- ▶ What secrets are within this image?
- ▶ What hidden gems do you see in your daily living?
- ▶ How might we make the kingdom of heaven more visible?



A prayer of approach

*O God, mere words cannot convey what a privilege it is to be heirs to your kingdom. As we explore your word, help us to learn about new treasures as well as old. May we see the amazing things you can do in our lives. We are part of your kingdom, and we come to you in awe and wonder.
Amen.*

A prayer for others

*Lord, you took so much care to describe your kingdom in ways everyone could understand, including us.
Your kingdom come, O Lord,
your will be done.*

We pray today that you will pass on to us that gift of making ourselves accessible.

*Keep us from being a stumbling block to those who would seek you; from using language that puzzles; from actions that confuse; from anything that keeps us apart from your people around us.
Your kingdom come, O Lord,
your will be done.
Amen.*

A personal prayer

*Lord, I pause before you
to contemplate the things I see as valuable in my life.*

*Help me to hold them lightly
and to be ready to give them up at the sound of your call.
Amen.*

Live your faith

Have a go at making some bread this week. As you add the yeast, thank God for his kingdom here on earth. If it turns out well, share your bread with some friends or neighbours.