

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 29
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: John 18:33-37

Background: During the last weeks of Ordinary Time in Lectionary Cycle B, the Gospel of Mark, our primary guide, continues. The kingdom of God is open for all people. We hear this message in the readings about the rich man, the disciples jockeying for position, the blind man, the saints, the poor widow, and even Pilate as he queries Jesus about being a king. We don't have to pass an entrance exam; we are already in the kingdom. Through all the changes that occur in our lives, what will not change is God's love for each of us. The kingdom that Jesus is proclaiming is already here and yet is also still to come – the undercurrent of Advent, which is coming near.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

My kingdom is not of this world. My kingdom is not won in a battle. Clearly, the kingdom Jesus offers comes a very different way than we expected. Jesus refuses violence. Instead, he speaks the truth and waits for ordinary people to hear his voice and choose to follow him. The ordinary gathers energy for the extra-ordinary to come.

Theme: King and Kingdoms

Before Class: You will need copies of the script which is found at the end of the lesson and Bibles if you do the "Look it Up" activity. Bring materials to make crowns: gold gift-wrap, card stock or heavy construction paper wide enough to go around a child's head, staples to secure it. Glue and whatever decorations found in a craft store will make fancy crowns the children can wear home.

Beginning: Tell the children that today we will fast-forward in the life of Jesus to his encounter with Pilate, shortly before Jesus is crucified. As we read the passage for today, let's look for clues as to why this Sunday is called Christ the King Sunday.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for the kingdom you have prepared for us and for Jesus who shows us the way. Amen.

The Story: John 18:33-37 Ask for volunteers to read the parts of Pilate, Jesus, and the narrator.

Reflection Questions:

- What clues tell us that this Sunday should be called Christ the King Sunday? (Its message is that Jesus the Christ is King. The Gospel for the last Sunday of Pentecost, although different for each lectionary year, focuses on the same theme.)
- Why is Pilate asking Jesus all these questions? (The leaders of the Jewish people had become convinced that what Jesus was teaching was not from God and so they wanted him arrested. Pilate was the person in charge of the government there.)

- We have had many stories this fall where people asked Jesus something and he gave them an answer different from their question or he responded with a question for them. Let's look for this happening in this passage:
- What does Jesus answer to these questions of Pilate:
 - Are you the king of the Jews? (verse 34)
 - What have you done? (verse 36)
 - So, you are a king? (verse 37b)
- What is different from most governments about the kingdom Jesus is describing? (No army, no fighting, people told to listen for the truth, and verse 37b)

Activity 1: Crowns Using the supplies you have on hand or have gathered so the children can each make a crown to wear and take home. Perhaps they will want to call themselves "The King's Kids" – perhaps even putting those words on their crowns.

Activity: Look it Up If you are doing the "Look it Up" activity, tell the children that today we have two pretty obscure books of the Bible. These books cover a period between the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. They are entitled I and II Maccabees. When they have found it, ask if anyone can tell us the name of the holiday our Jewish friends celebrate in December. (Hanukkah). To find out why our Jewish friends celebrate Hanukkah, read I Maccabees 4:56. To get the full story, read verses 36-58.

Getting Closure: Next Sunday is the first Sunday of Advent, the first Sunday of the new Church year. (You could suggest that the children greet people – next Sunday – with "Happy New Year!" and watch expressions!) You can invite the children to think about what might be different in church next week since it will be Advent.

Closing Prayer: Thank you for the stories you we have had this year that assure us that you love us. Amen.

John 18:33-37

Narrator: Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him,

Pilate: “Are you the King of the Jews?”

Jesus: “Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?”

Pilate: “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?”

Jesus: “My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.”

Pilate: “So you are a king?”

Jesus: “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

Published by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

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