

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

**Scripture: Luke 23:33-43**

In the final 6 weeks of this Lectionary Year C, a firm and hopeful tone soars in Jesus' teachings in a rich symphony of themes. The background music of the Hebrew Scriptures holds the notes of the new covenant — a law written in our hearts rather than codified in legal structures — The Spirit poured out, a vision for the appointed time, God with us, a new heaven and a new earth, and a branch from the tree of David — the remnant gathered. We can believe that Jesus heard this cosmic music as he distilled his huge message to the disciples.

**A Notation for This Week's Gospel**

This Sunday we celebrate Christ the King. We also close the third year of the three-year lectionary cycle. Today we hear a portion of the passion story in which Jesus is hanging on the cross in between two criminals. One is encouraging him to save himself. The other names that Jesus has done nothing wrong and asks that Jesus remember him. Jesus tells him, "Today you will be with me in paradise." Jesus' life on earth challenged those in power because it created a new way of life as Jesus talks about liberation from what we normally know as power. Jesus came to "to spread a revolution of love and grace, which entailed identifying and embodying a new kind of power and priority."<sup>1</sup>

**Theme: Christ the King of Love and Grace**

**Before Class:** You will need copies of the scripture for today or enough Bibles for everyone, paper, pencils, and art materials for the activity and response. If you plan on having a "Christ the King" celebration, you might want to bring celebration snacks.

**Opening Prayer:** Gracious God, thank you for all you that teach us and all that you have given us. Be with us today as we celebrate the love and grace you have given us. Amen.

**Beginning:** Invite the children to gather in a circle. Have each one of them name a word that they think of when they hear the word, "Jesus." When they have all shared, tell them that today we are talking about Christ Jesus our King and all we have learned over the last year.

**The Story: Luke 23:33-43** To tell the story today, you will need a Narrator, Jesus, Leader, Soldier, Criminal 1, and Criminal 2.

**Questions:**

- I wonder what you liked about this story today?
- What did you find difficult?
- As Jesus hangs on the cross, he asks for God's forgiveness for those who had crucified him. I wonder what that tells us about Jesus' love for us, for all?

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<sup>1</sup> William Loader, "First Thoughts on Year C Gospel Passages from the Lectionary; Christ the King," <http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/LkChristKg.htm> (accessed May 2013)

- I wonder what this tells us about the magnitude of forgiveness.
- As Jesus is being mocked, one criminal is encouraging Jesus to save himself. What would it have been like to be this man next to Jesus?
- What would it have been like to be the other criminal who understood what Jesus was about, and to simply ask Jesus to “remember him” today?
- I wonder what the man’s response was when Jesus told him, “Today, you will be with me in paradise.”
- I wonder what would our response be?

**Activity:** Tell the children that today we celebrate "Christ the King." Since it is the last day in the church year, it seems appropriate to remember who our year is all about. Ask the children what comes to mind, immediately, when they hear the word King. Tell them that king meant more when most Christians lived in countries ruled by kings or queens, so the idea of someone who was wiser than the one ruling them made the title fit Jesus. If king doesn't resonate, what other word, or words, might we choose? (Concepts like Main Man, Head Guy, and True Leader might get them started.)

What comes to mind when we hear the word Jesus? How might we celebrate, Jesus, our King?

**Option:** Invite the children to compose, with your assistance, a closing prayer for this year and for this day.

Some can write the prayer, others can do illustrations of the stories, and others can create a crown for the “king.”

**Getting Closure:** Invite the children to share what they have done in their activity time. If a group wrote a prayer, use it in place of the prayer below.

**Closing Prayer:** Pray the prayer you and the children have composed or you can use the following. Loving God, we thank you for all you have given to us, especially for the stories that tell us more about you, for your servants from whom we learn, and especially for your Son, Jesus. Amen.

## **Luke 23:33-43**

**Narrator:** When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said,

**Jesus:** ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.’

**Narrator:** And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying,

**Leader:** ‘He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!’

**Narrator:** The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying,

**Soldier:** ‘If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!’

**Narrator:** There was also an inscription over him, ‘This is the King of the Jews.’

**Narrator:** One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying,

**Criminal 1:** ‘Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!’

**Narrator:** But the other rebuked him, saying,

**Criminal 2:** ‘Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.’

**Narrator:** Then he said,

**Criminal 2:** ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’

**Jesus:** ‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’

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