

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 29**  
**Lesson Plans for Adults**

**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 Kingdom**

**Before Class:** You will need copies of the script found at the end of the lesson.

**Beginning:** In our world where there are few kings ruling, today we have Pilate, a secular person of significant power in a battle of words with Jesus whose power is not of Pilate's arena. As we read the passage for today, let's notice the differences.

**Opening Prayer:** Dear God, we are still so far away from understanding what power means in your kingdom. Thank you for your patience with us as we struggle with the concept. Amen.

**The Scripture: John 18:33-37** Ask for volunteers to read the parts: the narrator, Pilate, and Jesus. At the conclusion of the reading, invite the group to remain silent and ponder what they have heard. Then ask the volunteers to read the passage one more time.

**Reflection Questions:**

- Ask if any one word or phrase stands out for anyone.
- What do we think Pilate would have understood "King of the Jews" to mean? (A serious threat to his own position.)
- What does Jesus say would be happening if his kingdom were of this world? (His followers would be fighting to rescue him)
- What do we understand about Jesus saying that his kingdom "is not from here?" (Among other things, that violence begets more violence, power tends almost always to corrupt, etc.)
- If "everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice" what would we expect to hear? (Words full of reconciliation, love, justice, etc.)

**Option:** Invite the group to be silent for a moment or two and contemplate what our world might be like if we really "listened to his voice." After a few moments of silence, invite people to offer what came to them.

**Getting Closure:** In some Episcopal Churches, today is marked as Christ the King Sunday and the children are exploring this concept. Discuss how we would define "Christ the King" as the title pertains to this day. You may choose to close with the Collect for Proper 29 (Book of Common Prayer, page 236)

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, for your Word as we have heard it throughout the Lectionary Cycle B. Make our hearts open to hear afresh your word as next week we begin the Season of Advent and a new church year. Amen

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### **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."

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