

Children's liturgy – Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe (Year C)

Preparation of the worship space

Colour: White

Props: Coloured pens and pencils, blank postcards, card, glue or sticky tape to make crowns with.

Song suggestions: *Servant King (187, Celebration Hymnal for Everyone)*

Welcome: Today we hear how Jesus is laughed at while on the cross and how two thieves have different things to say to him while they also are on the cross.

Opening prayer: O Lord Jesus Christ, our King and Saviour, may we never forget your love for each one of us, a love that led to death on a cross. We praise you always. Amen.

First reading (optional): Samuel 5:1-3

Psalm: Psalm 121:1-5. R. Cf. v.2

Gospel acclamation: everyone stands and sings the acclamation together. Suggestions include: 'Halle, halle, halle' (Caribbean) from 'Sing With the World', Alison Adam & John Bell; 'Alleluia' (Zimbabwe), Abraham Maraire Publications, WCC & GIA; 'Celtic Alleluia' (traditional); 'Alleluia! Raise the Gospel' from 'Go Before Us', Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications.

Gospel: Luke 23:35-43

Gospel reflection: What do you remember from today's reading?

In today's gospel we read how Jesus is put to death on a cross and how he is laughed at and made fun of.

Can you imagine what it must have been like in front of all those people, to be in pain and to be laughed at? How do you think Jesus felt?

The crowds can't understand why, if Jesus is so important, if he's the Son of God, he can't save himself. They are very confused. To them a king is someone who has power, money, land and who dresses in expensive clothes - not someone who ends up on a cross with a crown of thorns on his head, who seems helpless and is about to die. Yet we know that this was part of God's plan - Jesus had to die so that we are saved.

There were two thieves on either side of Jesus, both on crosses as well.
What did they say to Jesus?

The first thief couldn't understand why Jesus didn't try to save himself and prove that he was the Son of God by coming off the cross. He thought Jesus should try to save the thieves as well.

The second thief tells him off for being so rude to Jesus. He knows Jesus is innocent and doesn't deserve to die when he hasn't done anything wrong. This thief asks only to be remembered by Jesus. Jesus sees that the second thief is sorry for what he has done and so Jesus promises not just to remember the second thief but to give him peace and forgiveness in heaven.

What does this show us about Jesus in our lives?

When we feel powerless Jesus is right there with us. Jesus turns bad things into something better and stronger. The second thief knew this and we can believe it too.

How does this help all people who feel powerless to change their lives and who are treated badly by other people?

Jesus gives us hope as we know that he rose again three days later. Anything is possible with God.

What does this tell us about the kind of king that Jesus is?

Jesus was indeed a king. And not just any king but the "King of Kings" because who else could rise again from the dead? Power, money, possessions and expensive clothes are no way as special as this - Jesus triumphed in the end.

Jesus came to serve others and so sometimes he is called the servant king. Jesus is the king of love, justice, peace and forgiveness.

This week, when things are difficult, remember that God is always with you. And when you see that things are difficult for others, perhaps you can try to do all that you can to help and serve them, so they know that they are not alone and forgotten either.

Intercessions *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.*

Let us pray to Christ our King together:

We pray for the Church: that it may remember its true kingship in Christ and not be distracted by earthly power and wealth. Lord in your mercy...

We pray for our brothers and sisters in every country: that we may keep on remembering their needs, and praying and acting for change where change is needed so all people may live free from poverty. Lord in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may remember that God is with us in the hardest times and help and serve each other when things are difficult. Lord in your mercy...

Closing prayer: O King of Kings, we nailed you to a cross but you crowned us with your love. You saved us with your death, that we might live in you in glory. Help us to serve one another and to be there for each other in the most difficult times. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Ask the children to colour in the accompanying illustration of a crown and to write words around it that describe the type of king that Jesus is (eg fair, just, wise, loving, forgiving, serving etc).

Make cardboard crowns with the children. Ask them to write a list of words on a sheet of paper that describe what they normally think of when they think of a king or queen (eg power, wealth, riches, palaces, etc). How many of these describe the type of king that Jesus is? Ask them to write the ones that apply to Jesus on their crowns. Then ask them to write any more words that describe the type of king that Jesus is on their crowns (eg fair, just, wise, loving, forgiving, serving, etc)

Ask the children to go home and share all that they have heard and thought about today. Ask them to do at least one thing in the coming week to serve and help someone else, especially if that person is going through a hard time.