**EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME**

**FESTIVAL TIME**

**EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY’S THEME**

***Introducing the Gospel***

*Christ the King (John 18: 33-37)*

The last Sunday before Advent celebrates the theme of Christ the King. Here is the triumphal acknowledgement that Christ reigns. The image offered from John’s Gospel is from the conversation between Jesus and Pilate. Pilate asks Jesus the direct question ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’ Jesus takes this as an opportunity to define his kingdom as ‘not from this world’. The theme of Christ the King provides an appropriate reason for celebration before the more sombre days of Advent begin. One way to celebrate is by holding a festival.

Our image to stimulate reflection on this passage is *festival time.*

***Core extract from the Gospel (John 18: 36-37; for reflection throughout the week)***

Jesus answered,

‘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 asked him,

‘So you are a king?’

Jesus answered,

‘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.’

***Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)***

Lord Jesus,

you are Christ the King,

your reign has no end.

Inspire us to live as your disciples,

to display your reign in our lives,

and to rejoice in your glory;

now and always.

Amen.

**READING NEXT SUNDAY’S GOSPEL**

**John 18: 33-37**

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’ Jesus answered, ‘Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?’ Pilate replied, ‘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 answered, ‘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 asked him, ‘So you are a king?’ Jesus answered, ‘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.’

**ENGAGING WITH THE THEME**

***Dwelling with the text (John 18: 33-37)***

Begin exploring John’s teaching about Christ the King by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

* What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
* What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
* What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
* What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

***Thinking and talking***

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

* What is the *political* purpose of Pilate’s first question, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’
* How do you interpret Pilate’s second question, ‘What have you done?’
* What do you make of Jesus’ replies to Pilate?
* Who is in command of this conversation, Pilate or Jesus?
* What does this narrative say for us today?

***Using your Bible***

Place Pilate’s question to Jesus into context in John’s Gospel.

* John 6: 15
* John 12: 12-15
* John 19: 6-16
* John 19: 19

Explore the image of kingship in the Psalms.

* Psalm 24: 7-10
* Psalm 47: 1-9

***Exploring online***

Widen your exploration of the celebration of Christ the King by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

* Images for Christ the King
* Feast of Christ the King
* Festival

***Drawing on experience***

The image to stimulate reflection on the celebration of Christ the King is *festival time.* Draw on your own experience of festival times. For example:

* When have you taken part in preparing for a festival?
* When have you participated in a festival in another culture?
* What would make a festival special for you?

What have you learned about festivals?

***Creating and making***

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by the celebration of Christ the King.

* Create a collage of images of Christ the King
* Create a mural of a festival scene.
* Collect images of festivals across the world.
* Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Christ the King.



**EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME**

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel.

We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

Our invitation then is for you to share your reflections, prayers and photos of your creative work with the Cathedral by emailing them to Nelson.Pike@liverpoolcathedral.org.uk

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary’s Centre in Wales and the St Christopher’s College Trust.



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