

Date: 11-25-18

Theme: King Jesus

Scripture: John 18: 33-37

Materials and Preparation:

- a. Print eight copies of the skit (see page 3 below); one copy for each of the players and one for each teacher.
- b. Using clothing from the resource room, have costumes available for students playing these roles: Jesus, Pilate, crowd (3 students). Consider bringing a special hat or vest for the narrator.
- c. The New Revised Standard Version of today's Bible text is copied for your convenience on page 4 below; it may be of interest to you as background information.

Vocabulary words: king, Messiah, truth, emperor

Objective: To understand the sense in which Jesus is *not* a king and the sense in which he is a king.

Opening: Can anyone recite the Lord's Prayer? (If not, have the students repeat the lines as you say them.)

Reading:

While Jesus was on earth, many people wondered who he was. They knew he was a carpenter, but was he also a special messenger sent by God? Was he one of the Old Testament prophets, such as Elijah, who had somehow come back to life? Was he the promised Messiah (deliverer or savior)? And if so, was he the king of the Jews?

Many of the religious leaders of Jesus' day disliked him. They were angry at him. Do you know why? Can you guess?

Eventually the religious leaders had Jesus arrested and put on trial by the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate. *What happened when Jesus appeared before Pilate?* Today's Bible text answers that question.

Read **John 18: 33-37** (*Whirl Story Bible* or *Spark Story Bible*).

Activity: Skit: *Pilate Questions Jesus* (see page 3 below)

To understand this story better, let's try it as a skit. [Have the students perform the skit three times, with different students playing different roles each time.]

Questions for discussion:

1. What is a king? What does a king do?
2. Is Jesus in some sense a ruler? [Together with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ is ruler or Lord of all.]
3. What does Jesus mean when he says, "Everyone who cares about the truth listens to me?"

4. What is a crime? Pilate seems to think that Jesus has committed no crime; so why does he condemn Jesus to be crucified? What does “crucify” mean?
5. If Jesus is ruler or Lord of all, should we worship him?

Closing: Close with a short prayer praising Christ as King, ruler of all.

Offering: Perform the skit for the congregation. (Suggestion: rehearse the skit one last time before performing it before the congregation. Emphasize the need to speak loudly.)

Skit: Pilate Questions Jesus

Narrator: Some people didn't like Jesus. In fact, many of the religious leaders didn't like him at all; they were jealous of him. Jesus was a very popular teacher and healer—much more admired by ordinary people than the religious leaders were. So, the religious leaders had Jesus arrested and brought to trial before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. Here's what happened.

Pilate: People say you are the king of the Jews. That's a serious accusation. No one can be king of the Jews unless the Roman Emperor says so. Well, are you the king of the Jews?

Jesus: Are you asking me because YOU want to know? Or are you just repeating what you've heard from others?

Pilate: You are Jewish; I am not. Your own people had you arrested. What have you done? Why are they so mad at you? You must have done something!

Jesus: My kingdom has nothing to do with crowns, or thrones, or armies. If I were that sort of king, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being put on trial.

Pilate: But you are *some sort* of king. Is that right?

Jesus: You say that I am a king. As a matter of fact, I was born to speak the TRUTH. And everyone who cares about the truth listens to me.

Pilate: You were born to speak the truth? Seriously? What's that supposed to mean? What is truth?

[Pilate turns away from Jesus and speaks to the crowd.]

Pilate: As far as I can see, Jesus has not committed any crime. And this time of year, when you celebrate Passover, I usually let a prisoner go free. Why don't I just let Jesus go free?

Crowd [in unison]: No, let someone else go free.

Pilate: Like who?

Crowd [in unison and loudly]: Let Barabbas go free.

Pilate: Are you joking? Barabbas is a robber. He's a really bad guy!

Crowd [shouting in unison]: We know that!

Pilate: Well, then, what do you want me to do with Jesus?

Crowd [in unison and shouting angrily]: Crucify him! Crucify him!

Narrator: And Pilate, in order to please the crowd, handed Jesus over to be crucified.

Teachers: The New Revised Standard Version of today's Bible lesson is copied here for your convenience, as helpful background information. (The NRSV stays much closer to the original Greek text than does the *Whirl Story Bible* or the *Spark Story Bible*.) I do not recommend having the students read from the NRSV but it may be of interest to you.

John 18:33-40 (NRSV) ³³ Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴ Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" ³⁵ 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?" ³⁶ 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." ³⁷ 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." ³⁸ Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him." ³⁹ But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" ⁴⁰ They shouted in reply, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a bandit.