

**Liturgy of the Word with Children**  
**Feast of Christ the King, Year A**  
**26 November 2023**  
**Matthew 25:31-46**

### **Catechist Background**

The Feast of Christ the King was instituted in 1925 by Pope Pius XI as a response to the perceived threat to the Church by growing secularism in the structures of world (and especially European) governments. Over the last decades, our understanding of the Feast has changed focus to emphasise the importance of conversion rather than imposing ecclesiastical rule from the outside upon political governance.

In today's Gospel, goats get a raw deal! Comparatively speaking, sheep were regarded as honourable in the ancient world, as they seemed to suffer nobly, rather than bleating loudly like their counterparts. In pantheistic Greek religion, sheep were associated with the more dignified deities and goats with the unrestrained, shameful gods.

Just who 'all the nations' and who the 'least of these brothers' are is open to debate. This scripture passage has been commonly interpreted as referring to how anyone in the world treats someone who is in need. This is certainly not contrary to the spirit of the Gospel (and indeed has some important themes of social justice to reflect upon). However there are some important textual clues in this reading which offer an alternative interpretation. When Matthew talks about 'all the nations' he generally means people who are not Jews (e.g. "Gentiles"). Similarly, the 'least of these' probably refers to the first Christian missionaries preaching to the Gentiles. Those to whom the true God is proclaimed will be judged by how they treat God's ambassadors.

In Biblical times, a landowner or a ruler may have had agents that he would send out to perform duties that he could not do because of travelling distance or a similar reason. His tenants or subjects would be expected to treat the agents in the same way they would treat the landowner/ruler himself.

### **Setting the Scene**

For the activity below, you will need a paper crown for each child and decorating materials. A wide variety is available on google images and you will find one below.

It may be useful to introduce the Feast of Christ the King by discussing the Feast. The Magi were the first to give Jesus the title 'King' (Matthew 2:2). In the ancient Middle East and Mediterranean, rulers were duty-bound to look after all their subjects; to fail to do so was to lose personal honour. Christ's kingship is not about luxury or ordering people around, but about shepherding all peoples to greater knowledge and love of God, and service toward one another.

### **We Say Sorry**

Leader: You are our King, Lord have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: You are our Saviour, Christ have mercy.

**All: Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: You call us to you every day, Lord have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

## **Gloria**

### **We Pray (1)**

Almighty God, you are the King of all that exists. May the whole universe praise you in every moment! Amen.

## **Gospel Acclamation**

**Gospel:** Matthew 25:31-46

### **Reflecting on the Reading with Children**

- What groups were people divided into? What was the first group told? What was the second group told?
- Why were both groups of people surprised? (It may be necessary to emphasise that this was not a tricky set-up designed to catch people out. It is not good to say that we believe in and love God and then ignore other people.)
- Who are 'the least' that Jesus was talking about?
- How would we treat Jesus if he was in this room with us right now?
- How can we show love for God by looking after each other?

### **Response**

Allow each child to decorate their crown as s/he wishes. Encourage everyone to put on their crowns. Offer the challenge to treat each other as we would treat Jesus.

### **We Believe**

Relating to the Creed what you have shared with the children, ask this series of questions and invite the children to reply, 'I do.'

- Do you believe in God the Father, who created us in God's likeness?
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, our Saviour and King?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, filling us with love in action?

### **We Pray (2)**

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the Gospel by saying, 'Jesus Christ is the King with concern and love for his people and so we pray...'

Leader: We pray for the Church in the world, that all Christians work together in love to make the world more generous and compassionate. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for world leaders, that they may make structures in the world work for the good of all. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for all people everywhere who do not have enough to eat, clean water to drink, warm clothes to wear, or friends to be kind to them. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for anyone in our parish community during this time of lockdown, especially those who are lonely or in any need. Lord in your mercy,

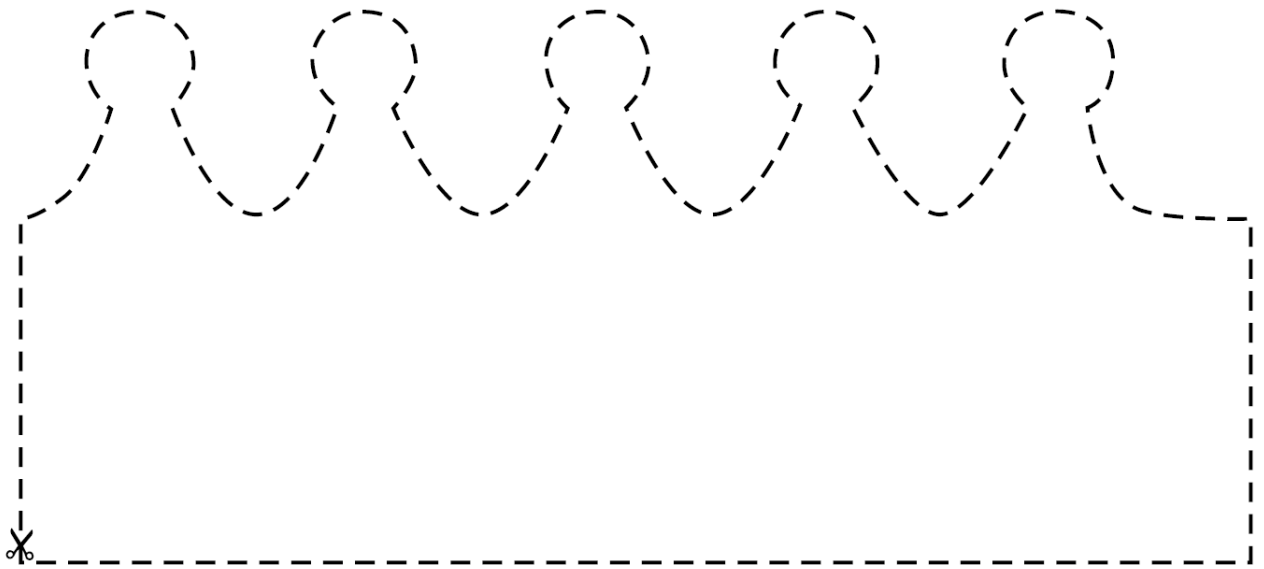
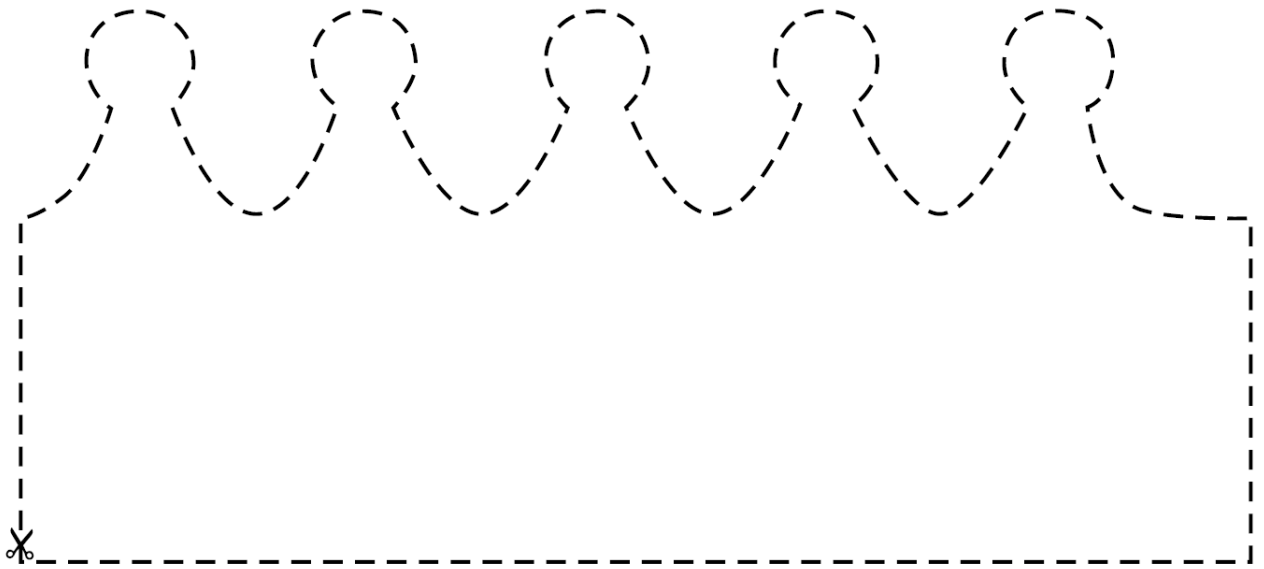
**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Lord, help us to be your agents in the world, showing your love to all we meet as we would show our love to you. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

# HOW TO MAKE A CROWN

<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Crown>



Cut as many templates as necessary and tape them together to wrap around the wearer's head.