

# Topic Title: Christianity – Kingdom of God

Year 6 Summer 2



## Enquiry Question:

What kind of king is Jesus?

## Disciplinary Focus:

Theology

## Background for Teachers:

Taken from *Understanding Christianity*:

- The Kingdom of God is, in essence, where God rules – not a geographical territory, but in human hearts and minds, lives and communities. Jesus' key teaching in the first three Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) is that he is beginning a kingdom where God's rule of love, forgiveness and inclusion will grow. The Gospels look forward to a time when this kingdom will spread across the Earth like yeast through a lump of dough, and they picture people finding the kingdom for themselves like a trader who comes across one amazing pearl and gives up everything to get it. Jesus compares God's Kingdom to a festival, a party, a treasure, a secret, a seed that grows, a harvest, and a wedding.
- For Christians today, across the world, being a member of the community of the Kingdom of God is a precious gift, and a challenge: living out the values of the Kingdom of God is the key challenge of being a disciple of Jesus, loving God and loving our neighbour. There is no space here for hypocrisy, selfishness or personal pride. Instead, generosity, compassion, love even for enemies, and a joyful willingness to put others ahead of one's own interest is the rule. Unsurprisingly, the Christian community often fails to live up to this vision, and can be as divisive, exclusive and lacking in love as any human community. The offer of forgiveness, through Jesus, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, give Christians hope that God can help them to be more loving and faithful.
- Christians use these texts to remind themselves of the way the world is supposed to be, and to reflect on how careful they must be not to forget that they are living in God's Kingdom. Many might say they find it easier not to let God rule in their lives, as Jesus' example shows that they may well end up in conflict with each other. They would probably agree that the point is not just to listen, but to act.

## Previously On ... (Links to Prior Learning):

Use the Bible 'big story' Frieze – what ideas do the children have about the Fall and sin?

## Big Questions:

Do Christians think Jesus came to Earth to get people *into* Heaven or to make the world more *like* Heaven?

What things might be found on Earth that wouldn't be found in Heaven?

What did Jesus mean by telling the story of *The Feast*?

What is the Kingdom of God?

What is the meaning of the story of *The Tenants in the Vineyard*?

If these are 'parables of the Kingdom', what kind of king is Jesus? How likely would Jesus be to forgive ... ?

Can a murderer be a good monk?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE		WHOLE CLASS INTRODUCTION / FOCUS	DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES	PLENARY
Lesson 1	<p><b>LO:</b> to explain connections between biblical texts and the concept of the Kingdom of God.</p> <p><b>Core concept focus:</b>  <b>Making sense of the text</b>  <b>Understanding the impact</b>  <b>Making Connections</b></p>	<p><b>Starter:</b> Lots of people say the point of our lives is to make the world a better place, to leave it better than we found it. Ask the children to think about how this can be done: list and rank some of the worst problems we face in the world today (for example, hunger, hatred, war and violence, cruelty to children, lack of love, lack of healthcare, poverty ...). Find out in pairs about some people who have done something to make one of these problems less awful. Write a Nobel Peace Prize citation to celebrate the person's achievement. List five ways in which people in the next fifty years – the children's lifetimes – could make the world a better place. Who will do this? Will they help?</p> <p><b>Input:</b> Ask the children to speculate: do they think Christians think Jesus came to Earth to get people <i>into</i> Heaven or to make the world more <i>like</i> Heaven? Explain that Christians believe both – and that Jesus' 'Kingdom of God' parables and their meanings explore more about these ideas.</p> <p>Show the following sentence from the Lord's Prayer:  <i>'Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven'.</i>  What do the children think this part of the prayer asks? Explain that for Christians, it asks that earth will become more like Heaven – and that Heaven is a place full of love with no tears. People do what God wants. Earth is not presently like this, of course. Ask the children to list ten things found on Earth which would not be found in Heaven – encourage them to make links to ideas about the Fall and sin from the Bible's 'big story'.</p> <p>Explain that Jesus told lots of stories that start: <i>'The Kingdom of Heaven is like ...'</i> Read the story of <i>The Feast: Luke 14:12-24</i>. Who do the children think Jesus was talking to, why did he tell this story and what do they think Jesus meant?</p>	<p><b>Task:</b> Children to summarise who they think Jesus was talking to, why he told this story and what they think he meant. The following prompts could be used to support them in making decisions about the meaning of the parable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the feast Heaven or is it a banquet on Earth?</li> <li>• Is the man giving the feast similar to God, or to Jesus?</li> <li>• Why do the rich and successful people make excuses?</li> <li>• When Jesus came to Earth, it was not the priests or the holy, religious people who welcomed him, but the common people and the outsiders: how does this connect to the parable?</li> <li>• Was Jesus teaching that everyone is welcome if they want to be part of his Kingdom?</li> <li>• Is Heaven more like a feast or a party than anything else?</li> <li>• How would the different people in his audience feel about the story?</li> </ul> <p><b>Further Challenge:</b> Children to compare their ideas with the commentaries in Resources.</p>	<p><b>Plenary:</b>  What is the children's understanding of the Kingdom of God so far?</p>

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Lesson 2	<p><b>LO:</b> to explain connections between biblical texts and the concept of the Kingdom of God.</p> <p><b>Core concept focus:</b>  <b>Making sense of the text</b>  <b>Understanding the impact</b>  <b>Making Connections</b></p>	<p><b>Starter:</b> Show a continuum, either on the board or with a piece of ribbon or string across the front of the classroom. At one end, show the word ‘allies’ – in agreement – and at the other end show the word ‘enemies’ – in opposition. How do the children think people felt about Jesus? All allies? All enemies? Where do they think the balance lies? Point out that Jesus is sometimes presented as an innocuous figure.</p> <p><b>Input:</b> Read the story of ‘The Tenants in the Vineyard’ from the Gospel of Matthew (21: 33 – 46). Explain that it’s a bit of a mystery story but that they will be given five clues to help them to work out what it means.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In the Old Testament, the people of God in the nation of Israel are compared to God’s vineyard.</li> <li>2. In John’s Gospel, Jesus is called the Son of God.</li> <li>3. The chief priests were Jesus’ enemies – they were jealous because he was so popular, and disagreed with him about religion.</li> <li>4. The Old Testament called the Prophets ‘Servants of the Lord’.</li> <li>5. The chief priests arrested Jesus and he was killed a few days later.</li> </ol> <p>Children to work collaboratively in groups to discuss what the parable really means.</p>	<p><b>Task:</b> Children to summarise ideas shared during the whole-class introduction to write a paragraph to summarise the meaning of ‘The Tenants in the Vineyard’.</p> <p><b>Further Challenge:</b> Children to explore the ideas on Resource Sheet 1 about what kind of king Jesus is if this, and the story from last week, are ‘parables of the Kingdom’.</p>	<p><b>Plenary:</b>  If these are ‘parables of the Kingdom’, what kind of king is Jesus? Has this story strengthened or challenged understanding from last week of the Kingdom of God?</p>

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Lesson 3	<p><b>LO:</b> to explain connections between biblical texts and the concept of the Kingdom of God.</p> <p><b>Core concept focus:</b>  <b>Making sense of the text</b>  <b>Understanding the impact</b>  <b>Making Connections</b></p>	<p><b>Starter:</b> If Jesus were the opposite of himself ... ask the children what Jesus would have been like if he were the complete opposite of everything they know about him? Use the following prompts to gather ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He would have been born in ...</li> <li>• People would have called him ...</li> <li>• He would have made friends with ...</li> <li>• He might have lived at ...</li> <li>• He might have had servants to ...</li> <li>• He could have had ...</li> <li>• Maybe he would have been ...</li> <li>• His message would be ...</li> </ul> <p><b>Input:</b> Read the opening verses of <i>The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant</i> (Matthew 18: 21-22) and ask the children to work in pairs to draft a story that illustrates Jesus' point. What kind of story do they expect Jesus to tell?</p> <p>Follow this by reading the story and discussing how effective they think Jesus' story is. What messages would his followers have taken from this story? Explain that the plain meaning of the story is that if you have been forgiven, then you should forgive others, but does this parable mean Christians should always forgive? Not all Christians see this parable in exactly the same way. How likely is it that Jesus' story means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That God is loving and forgives all wrongs, if people turn from evil and trust him?</li> <li>• That because people have been forgiven so generously by God, they should be generous in forgiving others?</li> <li>• That Christian parents should forgive their children are they mean, cheating, lying or unkind?</li> <li>• That Christians should never fight back if they are attacked, but forgive instead?</li> <li>• That a criminal who says sorry can become a church minister?</li> <li>• That everyone will end up in heaven, because God will forgive all wrongs?</li> <li>• That there is a price to pay for being unforgiving?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Task:</b> Use Resource Sheet 4 to rate different items as 'easy or hard to forgive' on a scale of 1-10 and consider if Jesus would forgive all these things.</p>	<p><b>Plenary:</b> Return to the enquiry question – if Jesus is a king, what kind of king is he?</p>

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Lesson 4	<p><b>LO:</b> to make clear connections between belief in the Kingdom of God and how Christians put their beliefs into practice.</p> <p><b>Core concept focus:</b>  <b>Making sense of the text</b>  Understanding the impact  Making Connections</p>	<p><b>Starter:</b> Forgiveness is ... children to complete a 'Twitter Summary Bubble' to finish this sentence in no more than fifty words, following on from the discussion of different ideas about forgiveness in the previous lesson.</p> <p><b>Input:</b> Tell the children the story of Clayton Fountain, a multiple murder in the USA who became a Christian monk. Discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If forgiveness is better than punishment, why is forgiveness sometimes so hard?</li> <li>• How important is forgiveness in the Kingdom of God?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Task:</b> Can a murderer be a good monk?  Whole-class P4C enquiry based on Clayton Fountain's Story (see Resource Sheet 5).</p> <p>Film the enquiry or ask a member of support staff or a child to track responses during the enquiry.</p>	<p><b>Plenary:</b>  Children to summarise their opinion in response to the enquiry question.</p> <p>GPC: how has their initial opinion developed during the enquiry?</p>