

## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

# ROYAL CROWNS

### EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

#### *Introducing the Gospel*

##### *Going to the Father (John 17:1-11)*

With chapter 17 John concludes Jesus' Farewell Discourse with his disciples over the last supper before Jesus goes out to face his arrest. In this chapter Jesus looks forward with confidence to returning to the Father. The key word for John in this passage is 'glory'. What John expresses in this Farewell Discourse, Luke symbolises through the Ascension which links the closing of Luke's Gospel with the opening of the Acts of the Apostles. The Ascension, or Jesus' coming to the Father, is seen as his enthronement. The Ascension is sometimes also kept as the feast of the enthronement of Christ as King.

The image to stimulate reflection on this passage is *royal crowns*.

#### *Core extract from the Gospel (John 17:1, 10-11; for reflection throughout the week)*

Jesus looked up to heaven and said,  
'Father, the hour has come;  
glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you.  
All mine are yours, and yours are mine;  
and I have been glorified in them.  
And now I am no longer in the world,  
but they are in the world,  
and I am coming to you.  
Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me,  
so that they may be one, as we are one.'

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

Risen and ascended Christ,  
we proclaim you to be our king.  
Give us grace,  
that we may serve you  
all the days of our lives;  
for you are the king of glory,  
now and always.  
Amen.

**READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL**

**John 17:1-11**

**Jesus Prays for His Disciples**

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

## **ENGAGING WITH THE THEME**

### ***Dwelling with the text (John 17: 1-11)***

Begin to explore this part of the Farewell Discourse in John's Gospel when Jesus speaks of coming to the Father 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.

- How do you understand the word 'glory' that is so central to this passage?
- What does Jesus mean by 'I glorified you on earth'?
- What does Jesus mean by 'I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them'?
- What do you understand by Jesus' prayer 'that they may be one, as we are one'?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

### ***Using your Bible***

Explore how John develops the idea of glory in his Gospel.

- John 1: 14
- John 2: 11
- John 11: 35-40

Explore the idea of glory in the Old Testament.

- Exodus 16: 9-10
- 1 Samuel 4: 21
- Psalm 26: 8
- Isaiah 40: 3-5

## SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (YEAR A) Sunday 17 May 2026

### *Exploring online*

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

- Glory in John's Gospel
- Images of Christ the King in art
- Ways to make crowns

### *Drawing on experience*

The image to stimulate reflection on Jesus coming to the Father and on the Feast of the Ascension is *royal crowns*. Draw on your experience of royal crowns and the reign of Christ. For example:

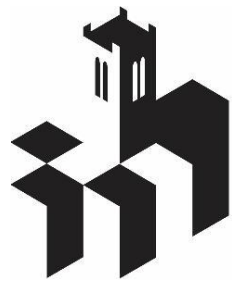
- What is your experience of seeing crowns and crown jewels?
- What is your experience of images of the Ascension of Christ?
- What is your experience of Jesus reigning in your life?

What have you learned about royal crowns?

### *Creating and making*

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by the theme of the Ascension of Christ or by the image of royal crowns.

- Make a poster displaying many crowns with the title 'we celebrate the Ascension of Christ as King'.
- Create a mural of images of crowns from across the world, including images of the crowned Christ.
- Make crowns to festoon your church.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of the Ascension of Christ or on the image of royal crowns.



# Liverpool Cathedral

## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

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.

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.



The scripture quotations contained in these materials are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Anglicised Edition, copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, and is used with permission. All rights reserved.

Copyright © Leslie J. Francis, 2026  
Canon Theologian Liverpool Cathedral  
with sponsorship and support from  
St Mary's Centre, Wales