

Bible Engagement: Cards and Kings

Year B, Pentecost 20

By Beth Barnett

This is Bible engagement for use with Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12
This resource can be used in Early Word or Bible Reading times.

You will need:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Several Packs of playing cards.• Jar of Jelly Beans
Time required:	5-10 minutes

Introduction:

We're about to read from the book of Hebrews.

We're going to hear about a whole lot of different kinds of beings: ancestors, prophets, angels, kings, humans. In the ancient world all of these different people were ranked – some were more valuable than others.

A bit like the cards in this pack. Kings are worth more than Queens. Queens are worth more than Jacks, Jokers are worth more than anyone – and then there are all the other cards with numbers, showing their value.

Show the pack of Cards

Invite several people to take a turn at shuffling the cards.

Ask your gathering if they know how to put the cards in order from highest value card to lowest.

Flick the cards onto the floor.

Invite who ever would like to come and start sorting out the cards.

Continue

I'm glad you know how to put them in order, because they seem to be a bit out of order. In the book of Hebrews that we are going to read, the writer talks about the order that people thought was right.

As the group makes progress, take a second pack of cards, shuffle and flick them onto the floor.

Oh dear, just when we thought we were getting somewhere sorting out the cards in one pack, suddenly it has become more complicated. Now there's two packs.

(shuffle and flick a third pack out)

And now there are three!

This is really going to take a while to sort out. By the first century, when Jesus lived as a human being in Israel, things had gotten really complicated, with Emperors and wars overtaking different countries, taking out the kings and putting in their own governors and soldiers – making up whole new orders of who was important.

Just pause everything for a moment now.

What if I said that anyone with one card, just one card, any card – not less, not more - could have a jelly bean? How would you order the cards then?

Delegate someone to give a jelly bean to anyone who presents just one card, while you continue speaking.

In our reading today – we hear how the ancient Hebrew people – maybe a bit like twenty-first century Australian people – thought that things all belonged in a certain order. Some things, and some beings were far more important and of far greater value than others.

Emperors, and angels for example. And as we listen we'll hear that they try to fit Jesus in there somewhere, trying to work out where Jesus comes in the order of things. Is Jesus up the top with the Kings and Gods? Or down the bottom with humans?

Well, that's where there is a bit of a plot twist. The writer can't fit Jesus in just in one place, and so wipes out all of the orders – and says Jesus makes us all equals, all brothers and sisters and brings us all to God.

As we pack up the cards – in any order you like, let's listen for the way Hebrews starts to order things, and then watch out for the plot twist at the end.



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Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors
in many and various ways by the prophets,
but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son,
whom he appointed heir of all things,
through whom he also created the worlds.
He is the reflection of God's glory
and the exact imprint of God's very being,
and he sustains all things by his powerful word.
When he had made purification for sins,
he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
having become as much superior to angels
as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.
Now God did not subject the coming world,
about which we are speaking, to angels.
But someone has testified somewhere,

“What are human beings
that you are mindful of them,
or mortals, that you care for them?
You have made them
for a little while lower than the angels;
you have crowned them with glory and honour,
subjecting all things under their feet.”

Now in subjecting all things to them,
God left nothing outside their control.
As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them,
but we do see Jesus,
who for a little while was made lower than the angels,
now crowned with glory and honour
because of the suffering of death,
so that by the grace of God
he might taste death for everyone.
It was fitting that God,
for whom and through whom all things exist,
in bringing many children to glory,
should make the pioneer of their salvation
perfect through sufferings.
For the one who sanctifies
and those who are sanctified all have one Father.
For this reason Jesus is not ashamed
to call them brothers and sisters,
saying,

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters,
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”



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