

Children's liturgy – Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)

Colour: Green

Song suggestions: Follow me, follow me (*175, Celebration Hymnal for Everyone*).

Welcome: Today we hear about how it is not always easy to follow Jesus or to accept what God wants to happen in our lives. Even Peter, one of Jesus's disciples found it difficult. Let's think some more about this today...

Opening prayer: Christ Jesus, you call us to follow you. May we have the courage to answer that call, even in the most difficult times. Amen.

First reading (optional): Isaiah 50:5-9

Psalm: Psalm 114:1-6, 8-9 r. 9

Gospel acclamation: *Everyone stands and sings the acclamation together.*

Gospel: Mark 8:27-35

Then Jesus and his disciples went away to the villages near Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Tell me, who do people say I am?"

"Some say that you are John the Baptist," they answered; "others say that you are Elijah, while others say that you are one of the prophets."

"What about you?" he asked them. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah." Then Jesus ordered them, "Do not tell anyone about me."

Then Jesus began to teach his disciples: "The Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law. He will be put to death, but three days later he will rise to life." He made this very clear to them. So Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But Jesus turned around, looked at his disciples, and rebuked Peter. "Get away from me, Satan," he said. "Your thoughts don't come from God but from human nature!" Then Jesus called the crowd and his disciples to him. "If any of you want to come with me," he told them, "you must forget yourself, carry your cross, and follow me. For if you want to save your own life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for me and for the gospel, you will save it."

Gospel reflection: What do you remember about today's reading?

Jesus asks his friends, the disciples, a question. He asks them who people think he is.

What answer do the disciples give? (*Elijah, John the Baptist – you may want to remind the children who these people are*)

Jesus then asks the disciples who they think he is. What does Peter say?

Peter believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He has faith in Jesus. But then Jesus starts to tell the disciples about what will happen to him. That he will suffer and be killed, but that after three days he will rise again. Peter struggles to believe all this - he does not want to believe that his friend, the Son of God, will suffer and die.

Peter feels afraid that Jesus might leave them. And he wants to protect Jesus from harm because he cares about him.

It is sometimes hard to do what God wants us to do, just like it was for Peter, because we are afraid, and we do not want to get hurt, or for those that we love to be hurt.

Jesus tells us that it will not always be easy to follow him, but that we must have courage, because God will always be with us. Can you think of a time when you were afraid and needed courage?

Some children have to leave their homes because fighting means it is not safe for them to stay. It can be very frightening. Rana is a mum with three children who live in Syria, a country where there has been lots of violence. All the children have disabilities.

Their city was bombed but they couldn't leave as they didn't have anywhere to go. So Rana and her three children found a place to hide underground, hoping they would live another day.

"The ruins can be dangerous for our children" Rana says. "What we fear the most is for our children's security and future."

The whole family today lives in a one-bedroom apartment. They have a couple of mattresses on the bare ground but no other belongings. Despite their struggles, the family keep smiling and joking. They are so brave.

What does it mean to follow Jesus? What can we do to show that we are following Jesus?

Can you think of a time when you have found it difficult to do what you knew was right and follow Jesus? Why was it so difficult?

Will you be brave in the coming week? What will you do over the coming week to show that you follow Jesus?

Intercessions *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.*

We are called to follow Jesus and so together we pray:

We pray for all the world's leaders: that they may have the courage to make the decisions that are best for all people, even when it is difficult. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all our brothers and sisters living in poverty: that they may be able to work together and build a better future for themselves. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, families and friends: that we may be true followers of Jesus, reaching out to help people who are poor, sick, lonely or frightened. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: God of light, as we try to follow you, give us the courage to reach out and help others, so that we can build a fairer world. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Invite the children to colour in the accompanying illustration and to write in the banner how they will follow Jesus this week.

Encourage the children to tell the people at home all that they have heard and thought about today. Remind them to try and show how they are following Jesus in all their actions this week.

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