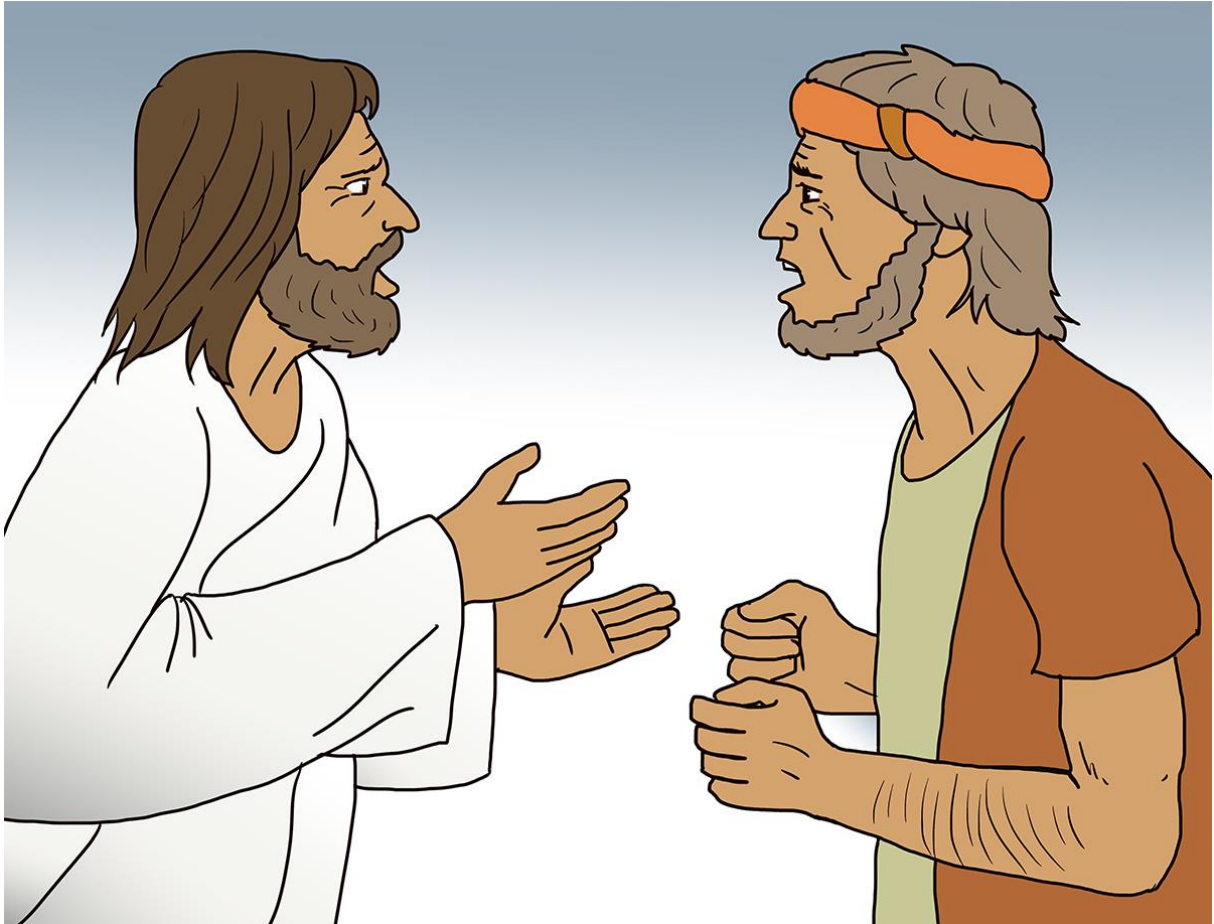


SUNDAY FEBRUARY 28<sup>TH</sup>

LENT 2



**Gospel reading: Mark 8: 31 - 38**

Jesus is telling his disciples a difficult truth about what will happen to him in his death and resurrection, but Peter finds it hard to take, and argues with Jesus. Jesus sets out that God's ways are different from human nature: we must forget about our earthly desires and follow Jesus.

Lord Jesus, we bring to you those who have been rejected for their faith,  
for being different, for telling the truth, for standing up for those who are vulnerable.  
Give them, and us, the courage to do the right thing.  
Amen.

## Mark 8.31-38

Jesus is telling his disciples a difficult truth about what will happen to him in his death and resurrection, but Peter finds it hard to take, and argues with Jesus. Jesus sets out that God's ways are different from human nature: we must forget about our earthly desires and follow Jesus.

Sometimes it can be hard to accept a difficult truth. We might wonder if there have been times when we have had to receive a difficult truth. How did we react? How might we have responded if we had been in Peter's shoes?

*This week we explore daring to be open without fear of rejection.*

Read the story and pause at the \* to share these points with the children (see *Stop and share* below). Then use the activity to explore the passage together. (10 mins)

Jesus knew that he had to prepare his friends for what was to come. One day, he drew his disciples close and began to talk to them. He told them that he, the Son of Man, would have to suffer and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the scribes. He would be killed, and after three days, he would rise again. ●



He said all this quite openly. Peter was very upset. He took Jesus away from the others and began to argue with him.

But Jesus shouted at Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan!' Then he turned and looked at his disciples and said, 'You're thinking about human things. This is about heavenly things.' He knew it was hard to hear, but they needed to know. ●

Calling the crowd to join his disciples, Jesus said: 'If anyone wants to become my followers, let them forget about themselves, take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, but pay for it with their soul? Don't be ashamed of me, and I won't be ashamed of you.'

Mark 8.31-38

● See *Share the Word*.

## Stop and share

- Remind the children about the Easter story and the things that were going to happen to Jesus.
- Explain the meaning of the word Satan (the devil, a personification of evil) and explore why Jesus might have said this to Peter.

## Bible Notes

We heard in last week's reading that as soon as God had said to Jesus, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased', Satan tested him in the wilderness (1.11-13). Now Jesus recognises Satan at work again as Peter tries to deflect him from his faithfulness to God in his service of others. Jesus refuses to succumb to this temptation to disobey God by focusing on human ambition rather than divine providence. This seems to reverse the story of Adam and Eve's succumbing to the serpent's temptation to disobey God (Genesis 3.1-7). That disobedience led to recriminations that fractured relationships, but Jesus' obedience establishes a new community as he invites others to follow his generous way of self-giving to others, letting go of selfish ambition 'for the sake of the good news' of God's glorious purpose for humanity. Despite the necessary rebuke, six days later Peter is included in Jesus' transfiguration, helping him to see that the way of the cross is indeed the path to glory

### ACTIVITIES

On a piece of paper draw as many faces with different expressions as you can think of – sad, happy etc. See who can think of the most!

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Sit on chairs next to each other and talk about a time when you have fallen out with a friend – but also think about how you made up again.

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Make a friendship bracelet and give it to a friend

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Can you think of a time when a mistake has been made and how you put it right? Maybe it was something you said or something you did. Discuss what happens when we make a mistake? Can and do we learn from our mistakes?

Perhaps you can think of a film or programme where this has happened.

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Can you think of a time when you were told something and you found it difficult to believe? How did it feel and how did you deal with it?

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Answer these questions (older children)

How difficult would you find it to speak up in a group?

What topics would you be prepared to speak up about even with fear of being rejected?

How do you react when there is conflict or disagreement?

Even some adults have difficulty in speaking up sometimes especially if they fear they are saying the wrong thing!

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**You will need:** cards, pens, items for each task.

Prepare at least 10 cards with simple risk statements on them, e.g. sing the first verse of 'God save the Queen' on your own, eat a chilli, enjoy a sweet, smile at the person on your left. Invite each person to take a card and choose whether to take the 'risk' or not. Ask: How did it make you feel? Did you feel under pressure to take part? Do you wish you hadn't? How did it feel taking a risk?

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Lord Jesus, we bring to you those who have been rejected for their faith,  
for being different, for telling the truth, for standing up for those who are vulnerable.  
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**Amen.**



Colour this picture and rewrite the story in your own words

## Rocky relationships

### Mark 8.31-38

We witness a difficult conversation when Jesus tells his followers that he must embrace rejection and suffering. Peter speaks up in protest and is strongly rebuked. Jesus then tells his disciples that being his follower means being prepared to share his fate; it is clear that this involves suffering.

Now read Mark 8.31-38 see p.2 for text.

### A note on the passage

No one likes conflict, but imagine getting into conflict with Jesus! Granted, Jesus seems to be saying some challenging things and perhaps Peter felt justified in trying to talk him down, but Jesus takes a pretty hard line with Peter. How might observers of this conversation have responded? Whose side would you have taken? Would you speak up and make your views known in a situation like this, or listen and silently disagree?



How do you respond in situations of conflict or debate?

## The cost of Christianity

Jesus speaks strongly in this passage about the cost of following him. In many parts of the world, this is experienced in difficult and dangerous ways. Visit [opendoorsuk.org](http://opendoorsuk.org) and read a story there about persecuted Christians across the world. Write the name of a person in the story, or the area of the world that you read about, on a sticky note, along with a request you have to God, on behalf of the person or nation.

## REFLECT

Jesus points out to Peter that he doesn't have the things of God on his mind but rather 'human things' (v.33). Often Jesus talks in a way that seems upside down to the way we might naturally consider things. Sit and chat to someone about the way you spent one of your days this week or reflect on your own. Talk/think about where you saw the things of God come into play and where it was all about human things. Is it always easy to tell which is which? How do you recognise when something is of God?



Thursday 4 March is World Book Day and children are often encouraged to dress up as a character to represent a particular book. If you had to dress up to represent a Bible character who met Jesus, who would you be and why? What was the relationship between them? What would you wear to represent that person and their relationship with Jesus? If you have children in your household, help them to actually dress up in the way you discuss.



You will need: any craft materials you have or natural objects you can find.

- Make a cross from whatever you have to hand. You could glue or tie lolly sticks, garden canes or other found objects together; or you could fold and cut paper to the right shape; or perhaps you have the skills to crochet or cross stitch a cross.
- As you craft, talk or think about what it means to take up your cross every day and follow Jesus.

## LENT GARDEN OF RESPONSES

In this week's passage, Jesus talks about how following him has a cost involved. Sometimes the things we do for others cost us something in time or money or energy, but we often feel good when we do them because we see the joy we can bring to another.

This week, find some ways to do acts of kindness for others, maybe in a secret way so that they don't know it was you. Can you leave something on a friend's doorstep as a surprise? Or can you offer to help someone in a way they need? Could you pay for the coffee of the person in front of you in the queue?

Either place objects that remind you of these acts of kindness in your garden tray or draw them onto your garden page, which you started last week at the beginning of Lent.

## St David's Day on March 1st

Dewi Sant (in English, Saint David) has been regarded as the patron saint of Wales since the twelfth century, or earlier. He is the only Welsh person to have been canonised by the (Catholic) church, and 1 March is officially recognised as the day to commemorate his life and work. It is also the occasion on which people in Wales celebrate their Christian heritage, their distinctive language and affirm their nationhood within the United Kingdom. Dewi lived in the sixth century and is thought to have died around the year 601. His calling was to be a monk in the austere tradition of the third century Egyptian desert hermits and ascetics. Because he encouraged his followers to bathe in cold water and to drink nothing stronger than water Dewi Sant was also called 'Dewi the Waterman' (*'Dewi Dyfyrwr'*)! He is believed not only to have founded the monastery at St David's (or Menevia), Pembrokeshire, but a dozen or more further afield.

Many stories gathered around his memory, the most famous relates how he was once preaching to a large crowd and the ground was said to have risen up under his feet, so that everyone had a better chance of hearing him. It's a story that captures Dewi Sant's missionary significance in announcing the Christian Way and living the Christian life among the non-Christian Celtic tribes of Western Britain. It's not surprising that his shrine in St David's soon became a place of pilgrimage, with four visits to St David's considered equivalent to one to Jerusalem and two to Rome! Dewi Sant is best remembered, however, for telling his monks in his last sermon, to 'do the little things' (*'gwnewch y pethau bychain'*), you've seen me doing.

A daffodil and a leek are the emblems of Wales. With some yellow tissue paper and green card make a small daffodil and wear it to remind you of St David.

Using white and green paper roll it up to make a leek OR perhaps you can have a leek for your meal.