



a Kendall Hunt Company

Sts. Peter and Paul, A-C, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



Junior High Session

Acts 12:1-11

Matthew 16:13-19

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, you are the way, the truth, and the life.

Help us to know and follow you.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

The topic for today is the Papacy and Collegiality. To begin, divide into small groups of four or five. Invite the youngsters to reflect on the positive qualities that they see in one another. Have each person write his or her name on top of a blank sheet of white paper. Explain that each group member will write a positive message for each person in their group beginning with the statement, "I believe that you are" Invite volunteers to share their positive statements. Discuss:

- What was it like to hear what other people believe about you?
- Why is it important to believe in yourself?
- What do you believe about God?

Allow time for discussion. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, our Church teaches what we believe about God. The Pope preserves the teachings of Jesus and helps to pass them on.

Listening to the Word of God

In the first reading from Acts listen to how Peter miraculously escapes from prison.

Read Acts 12:1-11.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- Who has Peter arrested?
- How does Peter miraculously escape from prison?
- When does Peter realize that he truly has been rescued?

Listen to the gospel today to find out what Simon Peter believes about Jesus.

Read Matthew 16:13-19.

Allow for silence.

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- What does Jesus ask his disciples?
- How do they answer Jesus?
- What does Simon Peter believe about Jesus?
- How does Jesus respond to Peter's answer?

Scripture Background

Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the readings using the Catechist background section.

In the first reading from Acts of the Apostles, Peter miraculously escapes from prison. An angel appears to Peter and guides him to freedom. It is all like a dream to Peter until he walks through the open gates and realizes that he is free. Then, Peter understands that the Lord sent an angel to rescue him. In this passage we hear that the church prays for Peter when he is put into prison. The prayer of the Christian community during this hard time shows the power of prayer in the face of evil.

In today's gospel, Peter identifies Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God. Jesus understands that Peter's insight is a blessing from God. Jesus responds by giving Peter a new title, "rock," and he announces that "on this rock I will build my church." Jesus also gives Peter teaching authority through the passing of the "keys" and he is given the power of binding and loosing. Peter is given this special role because of his ability to proclaim the true identity of Jesus.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- When have you experienced the power of prayer?
- What do you believe about Jesus?
- How does the Church help you to grow in faith?

[If you are not going to continue with the doctrinal discussion, proceed to the Gospel in Life.]

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

The Papacy and Collegiality

Because both Peter and Paul, the two major leaders of the Church, were martyred in Rome, we believe that the responsibility for preserving the faith has been handed on to the bishop of the local Church of Rome. Catholics believe that the charge of shepherding the Church has passed down from Peter to successive holders of the office of bishop of Rome. The Pope preserves and proclaims the teachings of Jesus and is chief shepherd of God's people.

The responsibility for shepherding does not rest with the Pope alone. Jesus called twelve apostles and the Church believes that the bishops are successors of the apostles and they have leadership responsibilities. A bishop is pastor and teacher of the faith in his diocese. Together with the Pope, bishops have the duty to preserve the truth Jesus has entrusted to the Church. The Pope and bishops serve the People of God throughout the world. The People

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of God along with the Pope and bishops carry out the mission of the Church. _____

- According to the tradition of the Church, who is the successor of Saint Peter?
- What is the role of the Pope and the bishops?
- What is the role of the People of God?

Sacrament Connection

The Sacrament of Holy Orders consecrates a man to a life of servant leadership to the Church. This sacrament continues the work Christ handed on to his apostles.

The Gospel in Life

How can you serve the Church community this week?

