

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul
29 June, 2025
Matthew 16:13-19

Catechist Background

In celebrating Saint Peter and Saint Paul on the same day, we are reminded about the variety of people who are called to holiness, and the improbability of what they are called to do. Peter began his life with Jesus as an impetuous young man, who enthusiastically if misguidedly cut off a soldier's ear on the eve of Jesus' death and then denied knowing Jesus a few hours later. Nonetheless, he grew to become a steadfast leader of a community that underwent and survived huge challenges.

Undoubtedly, Paul and people like him were one of those challenges for Peter and the early Church. Paul was old enough to be a respectable member of Jewish society and zealous in his application of the Torah, overseeing the stoning of Stephen. Yet God used this conservative Jew to become the most vocal missionary to the Gentiles. Clearly, God can use anyone to spread the Gospel, despite their background, but they may need to change their methods quite significantly to do so!

Jesus' gift to Peter of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven and subsequent instruction that whatever Peter binds and looses will be bound and loosed in heaven has been often linked exclusively to sin, damnation and authority in the Church. The questions below take a wider view of Peter's role, and recognise that 'binding' and 'loosing' can be applied in terms of freeing us from our sin in order to bind us to the good that God has made us for.

Setting the Scene

For the activity described below, you will need cut-out shapes of 'people' (at least one per person), Blu Tack, and two large items to stick the people to (these could be hula hoops, whiteboards, large boxes, cardboard tubes etc). All the 'people' should be stuck to one of the items, which will represent bad things that make us feel 'stuck.'

As you gather, tell the children that today is the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul.

- Ask them to share what they know about these two very important men.
- Depending on their age and knowledge, you may need to say more on these important saints.
 - This is very important re Paul as we will focus on Peter, as he is in today's Gospel reading.

We Say Sorry

Leader: Lord Jesus, you have shown us the way to the Father, Lord have mercy

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: You have given us the truth, Christ have mercy.

All: **Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: You give us yourself as our guide, Lord have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, help us to follow the examples of Saint Peter and Saint Paul as we celebrate them today. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Matthew 16:13-19

Reflecting on the Gospel Reading with Children

- Does anyone know what the word 'bind' means?
- What other things do we talk about being 'bound'? [e.g., books, old fashioned sandals, etc.]
- Sometimes people feel 'stuck' or 'fastened' to bad things:
 - Have you ever felt like you were stuck in a bad mood, a temper tantrum or afraid?
- What other bad things can make us stuck?
 - What can help you feel un-bound to those things?
 - *The children may find the language of "freeing" me from something easier to understand*
- What things is it good to be 'bound' to? [e.g., our friends, being kind to others, etc.]
- What helps us to be more attached to doing good?
- St. Peter had difficulties in his life, especially after he became a follower of Jesus.
 - Does being bound to God mean that things will always be easy for us?

Response

Jesus gives us the responsibility to help him unbind/unstick people from the negative things in life, and to bind/stick them to God.

Invite each child in turn to:

- come forward and unstick a paper person from the first hoop/box/etc.;
- they could say something like 'You are now unbound/freed from badness!' as they do so;
- stick the 'person' to the second hoop/box/etc.;
- they could say something like 'You are now bound to God's love!' as they do so.

We Believe

Relating the Creed to what you have shared with the children, ask these questions and invite the children to reply: 'I do!'

- Do you believe in God the Father, who has made the world out of love?
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who inspired Peter and Paul and still inspires people today?

We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying: 'St. Peter and St. Paul were bound to you in love and we hope to follow in their example as we pray...'

Leader: We pray for all who believe in Jesus, especially when it is difficult for them to spread God's love to others. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for people around the world who need to feel God's love. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for good weather for the growing of crops around the world, so that nobody may go hungry. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for people in our parish, that they may be generous in using their gifts and talents for others. Lord in your mercy,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Lord, help us to listen to you and to be what you want us to be, as St. Peter and St. Paul were. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**