



Catechist Background

In celebrating Saint Peter and Saint Paul on the same day, we are reminded of the variety of types of people who are called to holiness, and the improbability of what they are called to do. Peter began his journey with Jesus as an impetuous young man, who enthusiastically if misguidedly cut off a Roman soldier's ear on the eve of Jesus' death and then denied Jesus a few hours later, and yet Peter later became a steadfast leader of a community that experienced tremendous challenges. Paul and people of his ilk were one of those challenges. Paul was old enough to be a respectable member of Jewish society who was zealous in his application of the Torah, even overseeing the stoning of Stephen. Yet God used this conservative Jew to become the most vociferous missionary to the Gentiles. By implication, God can use anybody to spread the Gospel, regardless of their background, but they may be required to change their ways of working quite significantly!

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

Setting the Scene

For the activity described below, you will need cutout shapes of 'people' (at least one per person), blu-tak, 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 Saint Peter and Saint Paul;
- Ask: what do you know about St Peter or St Paul? *Depending on their age and experience, you may want to fill out their knowledge. Although Peter and Paul are both very important, because of time we focus on today's Gospel reading, which is a conversation between Jesus and Peter.*
- Say: the colour for today is red, because Peter and Paul were martyrs (they died for their faith.)

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 follow the teachings of St Peter and St Paul as we celebrate their lives today. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Matthew 16:13-19

Reflecting on the Gospel Reading with Children

Ask:

- Does anyone know what the word 'bind' means? What other things do we talk about as 'bound'? [e.g. books, old fashioned sandals, etc.]
- Sometimes people feel 'stuck' to bad things: have you ever felt like you were stuck in a bad mood or stuck feeling a certain way about something/someone?
- What other bad things can make us stuck?
- What or who can help you feel un-bound to those things?
- What things is it good to be 'bound' to? [e.g. our friends, being kind to others, etc.]
- Who or what can help 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

- Say: Jesus gives us the task to help him unbind/unstick people from negative things in life.
- Say: He also gives us the task of binding/sticking them to God.
- Invite each child in turn to come up and unstick a paper person from the first hoop/box/etc.
- As they do this, invite them to say "You are now unstuck from badness!" or something similar.
- Then invite them to stick the 'person' to the second hoop/box/etc, perhaps saying "You are now stuck to God's love!"

We Believe

Relate the Creed to what you have shared with the children by asking these questions and inviting them to reply: 'I do.'

- Do you believe in God the Father who 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 inspires people today too?

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 follow their example as we pray...'

Leader: We pray for all who believe in Jesus, especially when it is hard to do so. Lord in your mercy,
All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for people who need to feel God's love. Lord in your mercy,
All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for good weather for growing crops, so that everyone has food. Lord in your mercy,
All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for people in our parish, that they may be generous in using their talents for others. Lord in your mercy,
All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Lord, help us know what you want us to be, do and say, so that we can follow St. Peter and St. Paul by serving and leading others. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.
All: **Amen.**