**Children’s liturgy – Saints Peter and Paul (Year C)**

**Preparation of the worship space**

Colour: Red

Props: Coloured pens and pencils. A bag of small rocks or pebbles – one for each child.

**Song suggestions:**

Here in this place *(475, Laudate)*

**Welcome:** Today we hear how the disciple Simon recognises Jesus as the Messiah and how Jesus gives Simon a new name (Peter). Jesus tells Peter that he will build his church on him.

**Opening prayer:** God of all, just as Simon Peter built the Church, may we be rocks of faith and stand firm in your name. Amen.

**First reading (optional):** Acts 3:1-10

**Psalm:** Psalm 18:2-5. R. v. 5

**Gospel acclamation:** everyone stands and sings the acclamation together. Suggestions include: ‘Halle, halle, halle’ (Caribbean) from ‘Sing With the World’, Alison Adam & John Bell; ‘Alleluia’ (Zimbabwe), Abraham Maraire Publications, WCC & GIA; ‘Celtic Alleluia’ (traditional); ‘Alleluia! Raise the Gospel’ from ‘Go Before Us’, Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications.

**Gospel:** Matthew 16:13-19

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

In our gospel, Jesus asks the disciples who people say he is.

The disciples say that people think Jesus might be John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

Then Jesus asks the disciples who they believe he is. What does Simon say?

Simon says that Jesus is the Son of God. He believes in Jesus and he is not afraid to say so.

What does Jesus say and do next to Simon?

Jesus gives Simon a new name – Peter. And Jesus tells Simon Peter that he will have the keys to the kingdom of heaven.

Simon Peter was just an ordinary fisherman with his brother Andrew. But he was one of the first disciples of Jesus.

Jesus gave Simon the name *Peter* which means *rock* in Greek. Jesus wanted to build his Church on strong ground and rock is a strong material. Simon Peter's faith was strong here, like a rock, so Peter was a good name for him!

Peter is one of the greatest leaders of the early Church.

Simon Peter believed in Jesus. He wanted to follow him and serve him. And in this story he spoke up about what he believed.

What does he teach us about knowing Jesus?

What does he teach us about serving Jesus?

How can Simon Peter inspire us in our own life in the coming week? Can you be strong in your faith and speak up for what you believe in?

**Intercessions** *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or*

*you can use the suggestions below.*

Just as Peter believed in God, so also do we, as we pray now:

We pray for world leaders: that they may serve their people well and work so that all people may live free from poverty. Lord, in your mercy…

We pray for our Church leaders and all who serve, especially those who are rarely seen or valued but have their equal part to play: that they may find strength in God to continue their work. Lord in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may be inspired by Simon Peter's example of faith and service, to speak up for what we believe in reach out to all those we meet this week. Lord in your mercy...

**Closing prayer:** Christ Jesus, may our hearts be filled with joy as we honour Simon Peter, our leader and rock in the faith. May we be inspired to be like him, serving others both here and around the world and speaking up for what we believe. Amen.

**Activity suggestions:**

Ask the children to colour in the accompanying illustration of a rock and to write or draw on it how they will live out their faith this week.

Ask the children to choose a rock or pebble from the bag and to use it as a prayer tool when they are at home during the week - to hold it as they pray and to think about all that they have heard and thought today, and how they can follow Simon Peter’s example of faith and service to others.

Ask the children to speak up for something they believe in. For example, the world is changing because of climate change. Encourage the children to become Zero Heroes to protect our planet. Videos and resources to find out more and get the children involved in this are available at cafod.org.uk/primary – click on “Campaigning”. Zero Hero stickers are available to order from the CAFOD shop (shop.cafod.org.uk)

The name Peter means “rock”. Spend some time with the children exploring what their names mean. Does it reflect how they live their lives?

Ask the children to go home and share all that they have heard and thought about today. Ask them to try to serve someone this week either at home or in school and to speak up for what they believe in.