

Year A

Twenty-First Sunday of the Year

Who am I?

INTRODUCTION

Everyone knew that Jesus was a very special person! They had seen him cure the sick and blind, feed the crowds with a few loaves and fish, and do many other marvelous things. Yet, when Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say I am?" only one person knew the answer.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and read:

Jesus said, "Let your goodness shine like a light in the darkness, so that through you, the love of our heavenly father will touch the lives of others."

(Matthew 5:16)

SORRY

God is always ready to forgive us. Listen to this story:

Zacchaeus was a tax collector who was very rich because he cheated people out of their money. No one liked him, but Jesus was ready to forgive Zacchaeus and to offer him his friendship. Zacchaeus had a change of heart and was sorry for his dishonesty and selfishness. He promised Jesus that he would change his ways and try hard to be kind and loving to everyone.

(Luke 19:2-10)

Close your eyes and listen carefully to this prayer as you say "sorry" quietly in your heart:

Jesus, open our hearts

and make them more loving.

Like Zacchaeus, help us to change our ways
and make a fresh start.

GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 4.

GOSPEL (MATTHEW 16:13-18)

One day Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They answered, "Some people say that you are John the Baptist; others say that you are Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the other

wise prophets of old." Then Jesus said, "But who do you say that I am?" The disciples were silent until Peter spoke up, "Master, you are the son of God." Jesus smiled at Peter and said, "My heavenly father has helped you to understand this. You are the rock on which I will build my church."

DISCUSSION

The people thought Jesus was a prophet. Do you know who the prophets were? They were wise men who spent their lives telling the people how God wanted them to live. The best known prophets in the Old Testament were Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

Who answered Jesus' question correctly? How did Jesus know that this was a sign to choose Peter to lead the church? It takes a special light, given only by God, to let someone "see" or know in their heart, that Jesus is the son of God. In this way Jesus knew to choose Peter to lead the apostles and the church, after he had returned to heaven.

Does everyone in the world today believe that Jesus is God's son? Many still believe that he was just another prophet; others simply think that he was a kind and loving man who helped many people.

What do we believe about Jesus? We are filled with the Holy Spirit and the light of God so we know, like Peter, that Jesus is the son of God, the one that we must follow to find everlasting life.

ACTIVITY

Copy and give out this outline drawing of St. Peter. The children can add the details of his face with felt tip pens and glue on scraps of wool to make hair and a beard. Glue on the cutout garments after they have been colored, or use scraps of material. Add a staff to represent Peter as the shepherd of God's flock and church on earth.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we believe

that you are the son of God.

Your love for us is so great,

that you suffered and died for us.

May the light of your love

always burn brightly in our hearts.

Peter knew who
Jesus was

