

## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

# ROCKS

### EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

#### *Introducing the Gospel*

*Peter at Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16: 13-19)*

In Mark's Gospel, the event in the district of Caesarea Philippi marks the turning point when Peter, answering for the disciples, recognises Jesus as the Messiah. It is at this point that Matthew inserts into his source, Mark, those now famous words that have established Peter as the rock on which Jesus will build his Church.

The image to stimulate reflection on Peter is *rocks*. The Greek name *Petros* is translated *rock*.

#### *Core extract from the Gospel (Matthew 16: 18-19; for reflection throughout the week)*

Jesus said, 'I tell you, you are Peter,  
and on this rock I will build my church,  
and the ages of Hades will not prevail against it.  
I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven,  
and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven,  
and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

#### *Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)*

Lord Jesus,  
you called Peter to proclaim you as the Christ.  
Support all whom you are calling today  
to build your church across the world,  
to proclaim you to the nations,  
and to establish your reign for ever;  
in your name we pray.  
Amen.

**READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL**

**Matthew 16: 13-19**

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying,  
Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others,  
Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and  
blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my  
church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou  
shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth  
shall be loosed in heaven.

## ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

### *Dwelling with the text (Matthew 16: 13-19)*

Begin to explore Matthew's account of the event in the district of Caesarea Philippi, including Peter's confession and Jesus' commissioning, by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

### *Thinking and talking*

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- What do you make of Jesus' way of asking questions?
- How had Peter come to the view that Jesus is the Messiah?
- What do you make of the way Jesus commissions Peter?
- How do you understand binding and loosing?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

### *Using your Bible*

Compare how the events in the district around Caesarea Philippi are presented in the other Synoptic Gospels.

- Mark 8: 27-30
- Luke 9: 18-20

Explore Peter in Matthew's Gospel.

- Matthew 4: 18-20
- Matthew 14: 28-31
- Matthew 16: 21-23
- Matthew 17: 1-4
- Matthew 17: 24-27
- Matthew 26: 69-75

### *Exploring online*

## FEAST OF PETER THE APOSTLE (YEAR C) Sunday 29 June 2025

Widen your exploration of Matthew's account of Peter in the district around Caesarea Philippi by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Peter in Matthew's Gospel
- St Peter
- Rock as a symbol

### *Drawing on experience*

The image to stimulate reflection on Matthew's account of Peter in the district of Caesarea Philippi is *rocks*. Draw on your own experiences of rocks. For example:

- Where have you seen rocks that have impressed you?
- What do rocks symbolise for you?
- What are the rocks on which you have built your life?

What have you learned about rocks?

### *Creating and making*

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Matthew's account of Peter's confession and Jesus' commissioning or by the image of rocks.

- Make a collage of images of rocks.
- Make a poster telling the story of Peter.
- Make a display of pictures and images of St Peter.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Peter's confession and Jesus' commissioning or on the image of rocks.



## EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales.



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