Open the Word

Present the reading

Open the Bible at Matthew 16.13-20

Peter acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, and Jesus promises that Peter will be the foundation of the Church.

Choose from these two ways of telling the story.

Flashcards Give out flash cards to the children with the names of characters and items mentioned in the story. Whenever a name or item is read out, the child must hold up the right card. Use the words: Jesus, disciples, Elijah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Simon Peter, rock, keys, kingdom, heaven, earth.

The key to it all Use the template (on WEB) with the Bible passage printed on five key shapes. On the back of each key shape, write one word of 'The keys to the kingdom'. Read out the story in full, then ask the children to put the five keys in the correct order to make the phrase. They can then make a hole in each key, and thread a piece of string through it, to tie them together in a loop like a keyring. Together the group can use the big keyring to remember the phrase and reread the Bible passage.

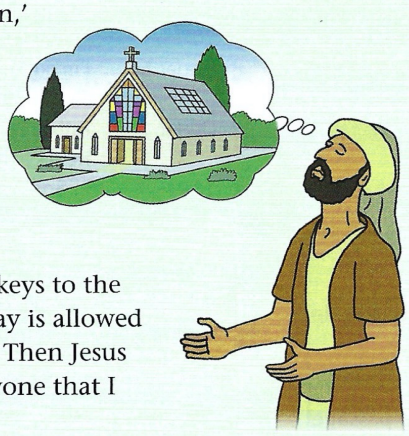
When people heard the stories about Jesus, they couldn't believe that he was just an ordinary man. They thought he was a prophet, like their Old Testament heroes.

Arriving in Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples, 'Who do people say I am?' And his followers had a list: 'Some say Elijah, or Jeremiah, or another of the prophets.' They even included some more recent heroes: 'Some say you are John the Baptist.'

Jesus asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?'

Simon Peter said, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.'

Now, the Messiah was someone that the Jews had been waiting for: a person God would send to rescue them from their enemies. 'You are blessed, Simon,' Jesus said, 'because God, my Father in heaven, has given you this answer. From now on you will be known as Peter.' Jesus gave him this name because it means 'rock'.



'On this rock,' Jesus continued, 'I will build my Church, and even hell will not defeat it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you say is allowed on earth, will be allowed in heaven.' Then Jesus warned his disciples, 'Do not tell anyone that I am the Messiah.'

Glossary

Messiah the 'anointed one', someone chosen by God to save the Jewish people, also a title used for Jesus.

Talk together

- What is the most important part of the story that we hear about Jesus today?
- How would you respond if Jesus asked you 'Who do you think I am?'?
- How important is it to you, to be able to trust your friends and family?

For very young children

Play and explore building our lives on Jesus.

Play materials: toy building bricks.

Storytelling

Tell the story encouraging the children to join in the actions as indicated in italics.

Jesus and his friends were walking along. (*walk on the spot*)
Jesus said, 'Who do you think I am?' (*turn both hands upwards*)
Simon Peter was the first to answer. (*point one finger up*)
He said, 'You are the Son of God.' (*point a finger on the other hand up*)
Jesus said, 'You will be called Peter – the rock. (*clench one fist to make a 'rock'*)
I will build my Church on you and I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven.' (*clench both fists together and 'build'*)

Play

Place a selection of items the children can build with on a cloth. Include stones, twigs, play dough and paper. Encourage them to investigate which make the strongest building materials.

Create

Provide boxes in a range of sizes and lots of tape and build a junk model church together. On the bottom box write 'Peter' and remind the children of Jesus' words.

Praise

Invite the children to build a tower of praise with toy bricks. They pile the bricks up as you shout out:
Jesus, we praise you –
you are the Son of God!
Jesus, we know you –
you are the Son of God!

Pray

Give each child a small stone. Say together, 'Jesus, help us to build our lives on you'. Then ask everyone to place their stones, one at a time, in a pile to make a prayer cairn. As they do, say, 'May (*insert name of child*) build their life on you.'

Find more prayers opposite and additional activities on the next page.

WEB *Very young children* page with more activities, prayers and songs.