

Rocky relationships

Mark 8.31-38

We witness a difficult conversation when Jesus tells his followers that he must embrace rejection and suffering. Peter speaks up in protest and is strongly rebuked. Jesus then tells his disciples that being his follower means being prepared to share his fate; it is clear that this involves suffering.

Now read Mark 8.31-38 see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

No one likes conflict, but imagine getting into conflict with Jesus! Granted, Jesus seems to be saying some challenging things and perhaps Peter felt justified in trying to talk him down, but Jesus takes a pretty hard line with Peter. How might observers of this conversation have responded? Whose side would you have taken? Would you speak up and make your views known in a situation like this, or listen and silently disagree?



How do you respond in situations of conflict or debate?

The cost of Christianity

Jesus speaks strongly in this passage about the cost of following him. In many parts of the world, this is experienced in difficult and dangerous ways. Visit opendoorsuk.org and read a story there about persecuted Christians across the world. Write the name of a person in the story, or the area of the world that you read about, on a sticky note, along with a request you have to God, on behalf of the person or nation.



You will need: any craft materials you have or natural objects you can find.

- Make a cross from whatever you have to hand. You could glue or tie lolly sticks, garden canes or other found objects together; or you could fold and cut paper to the right shape; or perhaps you have the skills to crochet or cross stitch a cross.
- As you craft, talk or think about what it means to take up your cross every day and follow Jesus.

REFLECT

Jesus points out to Peter that he doesn't have the things of God on his mind but rather 'human things' (v.33). Often Jesus talks in a way that seems upside down to the way we might naturally consider things. Sit and chat to someone about the way you spent one of your days this week or reflect on your own. Talk/think about where you saw the things of God come into play and where it was all about human things. Is it always easy to tell which is which? How do you recognise when something is of God?

DRESS UP

Thursday 4 March is World Book Day and children are often encouraged to dress up as a character to represent a particular book. If you had to dress up to represent a Bible character who met Jesus, who would you be and why? What was the relationship between them? What would you wear to represent that person and their relationship with Jesus? If you have children in your household, help them to actually dress up in the way you discuss.

LENT GARDEN OF RESPONSES

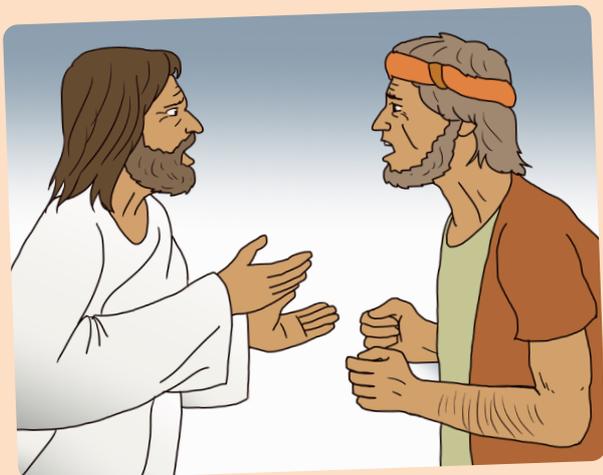
In this week's passage, Jesus talks about how following him has a cost involved. Sometimes the things we do for others cost us something in time or money or energy, but we often feel good when we do them because we see the joy we can bring to another.

This week, find some ways to do acts of kindness for others, maybe in a secret way so that they don't know it was you. Can you leave something on a friend's doorstep as a surprise? Or can you offer to help someone in a way they need? Could you pay for the coffee of the person in front of you in the queue?

Either place objects that remind you of these acts of kindness in your garden tray or draw them onto your garden page, which you started last week at the beginning of Lent.

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

Jesus knew that he had to prepare his friends for what was to come. One day, he drew his disciples close and began to talk to them. He told them that he, the Son of Man, would have to suffer and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the scribes. He would be killed, and after three days, he would rise again. He



said all this quite openly. Peter was very upset. He took Jesus away from the others and began to argue with him.

But Jesus shouted at Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan!' Then he turned and looked at his disciples and said, 'You're thinking about human things. This is about heavenly things.' He knew it was hard to hear, but they needed to know.

Calling the crowd to join his disciples, Jesus said: 'If anyone wants to become my followers, let them forget about themselves, take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, but pay for it with their soul? Don't be ashamed of me, and I won't be ashamed of you.'

Mark 8.31-38

Did you know?

- The word Satan means the devil, a personification of evil.

Mark 8.31-38 (NRSV)

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want

to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the Gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'