

# Assembly: St Peter and the Universal Church



## LEADER'S NOTES

The aim of this presentation is to help children to understand:

- (i) the role of St Peter in the early Church
- (ii) Today the Church is made up of many people from around the world who pray with one another and share what they have so that everyone, everywhere, may know how much they are loved by God.

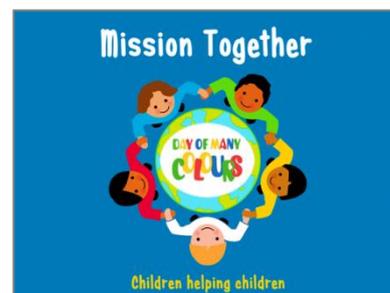
This assembly lasts up to 20 minutes. We recommend you deliver the whole assembly **but please feel free to use the material as time and circumstances allow**. The PowerPoint uses animations, so we advise that you run through it before you present to your pupils.

If you wish to say the Prayers for the Continents (slides six to ten) you may want to ask 5 pupils beforehand to lead the prayers.

## SLIDE ONE

Today we are remembering the life of St Peter. After Jesus returned to heaven, Peter worked hard to bring the good news about Jesus to people.

In this assembly, we will find out what St Peter did and how children today follow in his footsteps when you share God's love around the world.



## SLIDE TWO

Let's first find out about St Peter. St Peter was a very good friend of Jesus. If we want to know more about St Peter, where's the best place to start? A clue - it's the same book where we learn more about Jesus.

The Bible – or, to be more precise, the Gospel.



We're going to hear a short reading from the Bible now. In it you will notice that Peter is also called Simon. That was Peter's name before Jesus changed it. Listen carefully to the reading and we'll discover why.

*'Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say I am?" Simon replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon! For no person has revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the power of death shall not triumph over it."*

### ***The Gospel of the Lord. R/ Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ***

*Adapted from Matthew 16:15-18 (NRSVCE)*

During Jesus' life many people did not believe or understand who Jesus was. Some people thought he was a prophet (someone who proclaims the word of God). But Peter had realised that Jesus was more than a prophet - Jesus was the Son of God.

Jesus was pleased that his friend had recognised this and he renamed him, Peter.

The name 'Peter' means 'rock'. If you call someone 'a rock' it shows them that you think they are reliable and can be trusted. By giving his friend the new name 'Peter', Jesus was letting everyone know that he trusted Peter to take charge of his followers after Jesus returned to heaven.

### **SLIDE THREE**

This was huge job for Peter. He'd never been asked to do such a big and important task before.

Before he met Jesus, Peter was an ordinary fisherman on the Sea of Galilee (*point out the Sea of Galilee on the slide*). He worked with his brother Andrew, who also became a saint.

Even though Jesus had given Peter such a special job, Peter wasn't perfect and sometimes got things wrong.\*

But despite Peter's mistakes, Jesus loved him and knew he could rely on Peter to care for Jesus' followers.



*\* For older pupils: remind them how, at Easter, when Jesus was arrested and crucified, Peter had denied knowing his friend. Ask how they think Jesus felt when his friend betrayed him. Answers might be sad, lonely or hurt.*

*Now ask how they think Peter felt when he realised what he had done. The Bible tells us that he was very upset and cried bitterly. But Jesus is loving and merciful. He forgave Peter and after the Resurrection Jesus reminded him that he still wanted Peter to look after his followers.*

## SLIDE FOUR

Peter had great faith in Jesus and loved him very much. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter was able to speak to huge crowds of people about Jesus. He even travelled from his home in Galilee to Rome to tell people there about Jesus. Sadly, it was in Rome that he was killed for being a follower of Jesus.

*Explain that the distance from Galilee to Rome may not seem far to us today but in Peter's time it was a long and treacherous journey made on foot and by boat on the sea.*

Now Peter is a very important saint (pictured). A saint is a person who loved God so much during their lifetime that the Church believes that they are now with Jesus in heaven.

As St Peter was the leader of the first followers of Jesus, he is often called the first pope. Today our Pope is called Francis (pictured). Pope Francis lives in Rome, near to a grand Church named after St Peter (pictured).



## SLIDE FIVE

St Peter did what Jesus asked him to do – to look after his followers and share God's love with the whole world so that everyone would know how much God loves them.

St Peter believed this mission was so important that he left his home and country to travel to people far away.

Because of St Peter and other missionaries like St Paul, there are followers of Jesus all around the world. They - like us - are all part of God's worldwide family. Another name for God's family, is 'Church'!

Today let's think about how God wants us all to be missionaries of his love for the whole world, too. We can do this by praying for children in every continent and by sharing what we have with those children who are poor, sad, or frightened.

The Mission Rosary beads on screen are used to help children pray for other children around the world. Take a good look at the beads.

Why do you think the beads are different colours? Here is a clue: use the map to help you. Answer: Each set of coloured beads helps us to pray for children in that continent. Let's take a closer look.

- Green represents the forests and grasslands of Africa.
- Red represents the fire of faith that inspired missionaries to travel to the Americas to share God's love.
- White represents the Pope, who wears white clothes and lives in Rome which is in Europe.



- Blue represents the great waters of Oceania.
- Yellow represents the bright morning sun of Asia.

## SLIDE SIX

*If you have time you may wish to pray **the Prayers for the Continents together**. Otherwise, go to slide eleven.*

Let's start with joining our prayers with children living in every part of the world.

Let's pray together for the people of Africa.

*(Say together the prayer on the slide)*

## SLIDE SEVEN

Let's pray together for the people of the Americas.

*(Say together the prayer on the slide)*

## SLIDE EIGHT

Let's pray together for the people of Europe.

*(Say together the prayer on the slide)*

## SLIDE NINE

Let's pray together for the people of Oceania.

*(Say together the prayer on the slide)*

## SLIDE TEN

Let's pray together for the people of Asia.

*(Say together the prayer on the slide)*



**Mission Together**

Let us pray for the people of Asia and missionaries who deliver God's love there. We pray that the people of Asia may work together to build a land of mercy and peace, where all are treated fairly and treasured as children of God. Amen.

## SLIDE ELEVEN

Let's finish our prayers today by saying the Mission Prayer for each other, and as reminder of how we can share God's love with everyone, everywhere.

### **Mission Together Prayer:**

**May all children**

**In the world**

**Share love**

**Share friendship and live**

**In the peace**

**Of God's love**

**Now and forever.**

**Amen**



**Mission Together**

**May all children**  
**In the world**  
**Share love**  
**Share friendship and live**  
**In the peace**  
**Of God's love**  
**Now and forever**  
**Amen**

*This assembly has been prepared by Mission Together, the Pope's official children's charity for overseas mission. Mission Together is the children's branch of Missio.*

*96% of money donated to Mission Together by children goes directly towards work with children. Although all projects are Church-backed, we follow Christ's example – helping everyone in need, regardless of background or belief*