



28 February – 6 March 2021 • Faith 24/7

Rocky relationships

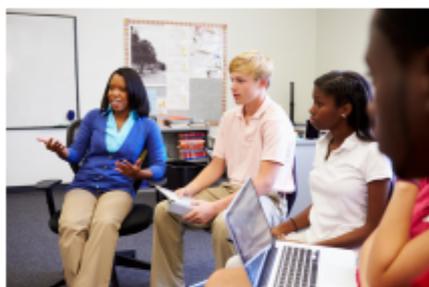
 **Mark 8.31-38**

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.



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.



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?

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.



Lent in lockdown

Dear Friends, the Lent course "For such a time as this" that will be running through Lent. It's not too late to take part. The course begins on Wednesday 24th February at 7.30 p.m. for six weeks. If you would like to see a copy, please follow this link:

<https://www.uspg.org.uk/engage/support5/forsuchatime/lent-course-2021/>

Let Rob know if you want to receive a link to the zoom session or a hard copy of the booklet.

Thought for the week:

How do you cope with disagreement? For lots of reasons, each of us reacts differently when people disagree with us or one another. Some can become quite feisty like hedgehogs and enjoy the argument; others can become silent like tortoises and hide in their shells.

What is the way that Christians should respond? Is the best way to be peaceful and calm, never to disagree? Maybe when the things we're disagreeing about aren't very important. But what if the thing we're disagreeing about is important or about truth and justice?

Jesus and Peter are an example of how open disagreement can lead to a place of understanding one another and God's way better. Jesus is trying to teach the disciples that the kind of Messiah that they have in mind isn't quite right. They still seem to think that Jesus is going to be powerful and conquer the world. Jesus wants to show them that he's going to appear to do the opposite: he will be rejected, suffer and die. But think carefully about the scene. Perhaps you know people, especially leaders, who you'd be frightened to disagree with because they might reject you! Jesus seems to have created an atmosphere among his friends where they weren't afraid. Peter is quite confident in his contradiction of Jesus. And Jesus is comfortable to disagree with Peter – very strongly. But is Peter kicked out of the group? Is Peter rejected? Far from it – in fact, just a few verses further in chapter 9, we read that Jesus chooses Peter with James and John for a special experience.

If we are to grow as people of faith, we need to be able to create an environment where we feel safe enough to disagree but know we will not be rejected. Can we do that?

Daily Readings for week commencing 1 st March 2021		
Monday	Jeremiah 7: 21-end	John 6: 41-51
Tuesday	Jeremiah 8: 1-15	John 6: 52-59
Wednesday	Jeremiah 8: 18-9:11	John 6: 60-end
Thursday	Jeremiah 9: 12-24	John 7: 1-13
Friday	Jeremiah 10: 1-6	John 7: 14-24
Saturday	Jeremiah 10: 17-24	John 7: 25-36

Pray for those in need...Sally, Zena, Katie-Louise, Pam, Sue, Bryn, Evelyn, Shane, Pat, Heather, Dorothy, Mandy, and Joyce. **Please remember those who mourn the loss of loved ones at this time...especially Bettie and Hasan.**