*Explain how the Pope is elected. When a Pope dies, cardinals from all over the world meet in St Peter’s Basilica within three weeks to vote for the next Pope. Cardinals are very important bishops who represent almost every country in the world. Unfortunately, there is no cardinal to represent Malaysia (there is really a political reason for this, lack of diplomatic relations with the Vatican until recently being one of them, but you can tell the children that there are not many Catholics in Malaysia, which is only partly true). Many of the cardinals run dioceses all over the world while others act like ministers in the Vatican government. Only cardinals below the age of 80 may vote and there can only be a maximum of 120 of such voting cardinals at any one time. Cardinals wear red.*

When a Pope dies, the cardinal who heads the Pope’s household staff, known as the camerlengo, calls out the Pope’s baptismal name three times. He also taps the forehead of the dead Pope with a silver hammer. This will confirm the Pope’s death. The body of the Pope is taken away to be embalmed so that it could last until the funeral and the dead Pope’s apartment is sealed up. The ring of the Pope will be smashed up to prevent anyone using the ring as a seal for any official documents.

The eligible cardinals are locked up (literally!!) in the Vatican for duration of the conclave to elect the Pope. No one or any communication is allowed in or out and the cardinals are only allowed doctors for those who need one. Food goes in and out through a window. They will hold voting sessions twice a day with very strict rules as to how the voting should be conducted. If no candidate gets a majority, the voting papers are burnt with powder to give black smoke. If the voting is successful, the papers are burnt to give white smoke.

The new Pope will be asked if he consent to be Pope and then asked what name he will adopt as Pope. He will then put on one of the three sets of new papal vestments (S/M/L) and is introduced to the world. He will also be given a new papal ring with the insignia of a fisherman as he is now a successor of St Peter, who was a fisherman.

# LSW

children

Year B

##### Twenty-fourth Ordinary Sunday

## Images

The Pope and his election

## Points to note

There is a board inside the Westminster Catholic Cathedral in London, which lists down the names of all the Popes and next to them, the list of the leading bishops in England at that time. There are two ideas here that are important. Each bishop is consecrated a bishop by another bishop, who has been consecrated by another bishop, who has been consecrated by another bishop, and so on, until you reach a bishop, who has been consecrated by one of the Apostles. This is known as the Apostolic Succession, the principle that every Catholic bishop traces his lineage back to the Apostles and we have the list of bishops to prove it. Every diocese in the world keeps such a list of its own line of bishops. This list that traces back to the Apostles is our proof that what our bishops teach is the same as what the Apostles, and Jesus, taught.

The other is one of communion. Every Catholic owes allegiance to his or her local bishop. We are said to be in communion with our bishop. Each bishop is in turn in communion with the Pope. Therefore, each Catholic is communion with each other through his or her communion with the local bishop who is in communion with other bishops through his communion with the Pope.

In Year A, we discuss the structure of the Church while, in Year B, we explain how the Pope is elected and, in Year C, we discuss the Apostolic Succession. You can refer to the leaflet for Sunday 21 Year A for the structure of the Church.

## Liturgy

### Acclamation

Alleluia! Alleluia!

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, says the Lord;

no one can come to the Father except through me.

Alleluia!

Gospel

*Explain that Jesus is travelling around some areas outside of Israel on the way to Jerusalem and has reached a place where people there worship many other gods. So, with so many gods around, Jesus wants to know who his disciples think he is.*

The Lord be with you.

*All:*  And also with you.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Mark

(Mk 8:27-35)

Jesus and his disciples left for the village round Caesarea Philippi. On the way he put this question to his disciples, “Who do people say I am?” And they told him. “John the Baptist.” They said, “others Elijah; others again, one of the prophets.” But you, “he asked, “who do you say I am?” Peter spoke up and said to him, “You are the Christ.” And he gave them strict orders not to tell anyone about him.

And he began to teach them that the Son of Man was destined to suffer grievously, to be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and to be put to death, and after three days to rise again; and he said all this quite openly. Then taking him aside, Peter started to remonstrate with him. But, turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said to him, “Get behind me, Satan! Because the way you think is not God’s way but man’s.”

He called the people and his disciples to him and said, “If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord

# Discussion

Who is the head of the Church? *Jesus. Explain that Jesus does not want to take care of the entire Church by himself and so he has a lot of people to help him. He has the Pope to help him. The Pope helps Jesus to take care of all Catholics throughout the world, all 1.1 billion of us. The Pope wears white and lives in Rome. He has a huge church called St Peter’s Basilica. This is because the first Pope was St Peter.*

*The Pope could not possibly take care* *of all Catholics, too. So he has over 3,000 bishops to help him. Most of these bishops take care of an area called a diocese. Some dioceses are larger than others and are called archdioceses. We are in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, which includes KL, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang and Terengganu. There are more than 60,000 Catholics in our archdiocese. The bishop who is appointed to help the Pope take care of all Catholics in our diocese is Archbishop Julian. Bishops wear purple. Archbishop Julian’s church is called St John’s Cathedral.*

*Even Archbishop Julian needs help to take care of so many Catholics in five states. So, there are over 60 priests to help him. There are 400,000 priests helping bishops throughout the world. Many of these priests help take care of a parish. We are in the parish of St Francis Xavier and there are 7,000 people in our parish who comes to our church for mass. Priests normally wear black except in hot countries like ours.*

*Sometimes, priests may have religious brothers and sisters (not siblings at home) to help them do God’s work. These brothers and sisters run schools, orphanages and hospitals or they may do other work like praying for us in monasteries. There are about one million of them throughout the world.*