### LSW

children

*Bishops are important people. They teach us the same things that the Apostles have been teaching. So, when the Pope picks someone to succeed him, he will choose the next bishop very carefully and ensure that they are well trained. The new bishop will be consecrated a bishop by several bishops, who themselves have been consecrated a bishop by several other bishops, laying their hands on the new bishop. Having these other bishops there is the guarantee that the new bishop is a genuine Catholic bishop, who can trace his lineage back to the Apostles. You can explain the Apostolic Succession in these simple terms and that the Apostles were the only bishops who were consecrated bishops by Jesus himself.*

*Someone once said that it is a bit like knowing who your father is. This is quite true: every diocese in the world has a secret archive, which must include, among other things, the list of all the bishops in that diocese from the very beginning and the Pope in communion for each bishop. While our diocese was started in 1955, we can also trace the line back to the first bishop of Melaka in 1558. Unfortunately that line was taken over by the Archdiocese of Singapore.*

*You can find out more about priests and bishops in the Church* [*here*](http://childrenlivingthesundayword.blogspot.com/2013/09/soundbites-on-priests-and-bishops.html)*.*

Year A

**Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Images**

The Pope and the structure of the Church

**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 which 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, who has been consecrated by another 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.

**Liturgy**

Acclamation before the Gospel

Alleluia! Alleluia!

You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church.

And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it.

Alleluia!

Gospel

*Jesus has just been debating with some Jews and Pharisees.*

The Lord be with you.

*All:*  And also with you.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Matthew

*All:*  Glory to you O Lord

(Mt 16:13-20)

When Jesus came to the region of Ceasarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But you,” he said, “who do you say I am?” Then Simon Peter spoke up, “You are the Christ,” he said, “the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.” Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

This is the Word of the Lord

**Dialogue**

Who is the head of the Church? *Jesus. Explain that Jesus does not take care of the entire Church by himself and 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 one 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 5,000 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, who wears purple and lives in KL. 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 them. 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 come to our church for mass. Priests normally wear black except in hot countries like ours.*

*Sometimes, priests may have brothers and sisters 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 more than 700,000 of them throughout the world.*