## For older children (if you are feeling adventurous)

Do you know any famous Christians? *Let them talk about what these persons did as Christians. They could be saints, martyrs, priests, or laypeople who stood up for the principles of Jesus. Expand it to include non-Christians who stood up for Gospel values: Gandhi, etc. The point here is not so much about Christianity but more about defending the Gospel.*

In the life of each of these Christians, they often have to make decisions at one turning point in their lives. Here is a story of St Maximilian Kolbe. Maximilian Kolbe was a priest during the Second World War. The German soldiers arrested him because he was a priest and was sent to a concentration camp. One day, one of the prisoners escaped and the camp commandant decided to shoot ten prisoners as a punishment to everyone. One of the men chosen to be shot broke down and cried. He asked to be spared because he has a family. So, Fr Maximilian stepped forward and asked to be shot instead, so that the man may be spared.

Do you think it was an easy decision for him? What would most people have done in his shoes? What would Jesus have done? Did Fr Maximilian do as Jesus would have done? Is it easy to be a Christian?

*Take another example: Martin Luther King Jr.* Up to 60 years ago, black people in USA were not allowed to go to the same schools as white people or even sit in the front of the bus with white people. Once, a black woman refused to go to the seats at the back of the bus because she was tired. For that she was jailed. Her pastor, Martin Luther King decided to protest about it. The protests grew bigger, but even when some white people became violent, Martin Luther King’s followers did not. After many years of protests and violence and taunting by many white people, the blacks in America were given the same rights as the whites.

You know, that lady could have just gone to the back of the bus, or Martin Luther King could have just told her to accept it, or his followers could have chosen to be violent. But they did not, because each time, they made the choice that Jesus would have chosen, even though it was easier to choose otherwise. Would you? It is not easy to be a Christian, is it?

***LSW***

children

Year C

# Thirteenth Sunday In Ordinary Time

**Theme**

Responsibility of a Christian

**Points to note**

This is a tough one. In the first place, this is more a collection of sayings than a single cohesive narrative. Also, the topics for discussion can be a little ‘heavy’. They, however, deal with the difficulties of discipleship.

Discipleship is sometimes thought of being in the realm of priests, missionaries and nuns who have answered the calling of a vocation. Of course, it is more than that. All of us are called to be disciples. We dealt with Peter’s profession of faith last week. Peter was put in quite a difficult spot by Jesus to say where his loyalties lie. This week, the time for big words is past and we see what Jesus expects from us as disciples.

While the reading refers to the commitment of the disciples to physically follow Jesus, we may reflect on Jesus’ implicit call to us to be committed to following his teachings. It is not easy to be a Christian, isn’t it?

**Liturgy**

Acclamation before the Gospel

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening:

you have the message of eternal life.

Alleluia!

## Gospel

### Explain that the stories starting this Sunday are about Jesus on the journey to Jerusalem, after having left his hometown.

The Lord be with you.

*All:*  And also with you.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Luke

*All:*  Glory to you O Lord

(Lk 9:51-62)

As the time drew near for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely took the road for Jerusalem and sent messengers ahead of him. These set out and they went into a Samaritan village to make preparations for him, but the people would not receive him because he was making for Jerusalem. Seeing this, the disciples James and John said, “Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to burn them up?” But he turned and rebuked them, and they went off to another village.

As they travelled along they met a man on the road who said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus answered, “Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”

Another to whom he said, “Follow me,” replied, “Let me go and bury my father first.” But he answered, “Leave the dead to bury the dead; your duty is to go and spread the news of the kingdom of God.”

Another said, “I will follow you, sir, but first let me go and say good-bye to my people at home.” Jesus said to him, “Once the hand is laid on the plough, no one who looks back is fit for the kingdom of God,”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Dialogue**

## For younger children (or older children too)

Can you think of anybody who is a follower of Christ? *Guide them to the priests and religious.* How did (say) Fr become a follower of Jesus? *Well, there are several points: (i) when he chose to go into the novitiate, which is a house where he started to study to be a priest; (ii) when he took his vows after two years, and became a Jesuit; (iii) when he was ordained, that is after more than ten years of studies.*

*Discuss the three vows that he took: (i) poverty: Jesuits are not allowed to own anything. Everything a Jesuit has is owned by the Church. They are given only stipends, which is a little bit of pocket money. At one point, each Jesuit has to write out a will to give everything away; (ii) chastity: Not allowed to marry, simple as that; and (iii) obedience: Jesuits are required to follow orders of their superiors.*

## Link it up with the three conversation Jesus had with people who wanted to join him: (i) foxes have holes …. : This refers to the vow of poverty. Following Jesus means we give up the comforts of life; (ii) let the dead bury the dead (there are two meanings of *dead* here – let the spiritually dead (i.e. people who didn’t want to follow Jesus) bury the bodily dead): this is about chastity, that whoever follows Jesus have to give up their family; (iii) hand is on the plough …. (in the olden days when a buffalo/horse is used to pull the plough, one need to concentrate & not look away if you don’t want the buffalo/horse to go off-course – I guess the modern equivalent is not get distracted when driving a car): this refers to obedience where you need to be single minded on getting your job done.

## Is it easy for anyone to give up all these to join Jesus? *Discuss if they would. Discuss the idea of sacrifice.* Even if we all can’t be priests and nuns, is there anything we can do to show people that we are followers of Jesus? *Something must be difficult for it to be a sacrifice. Discuss something where they have to think and make a conscious decision.*