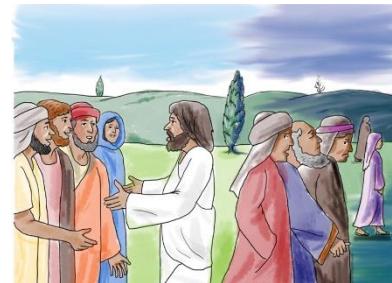




Read John 6.56-69

You may like to use this material as a basis for discussion in your family.

In today's gospel reading the disciples have to make a decision – whether to follow Jesus or not. The problem is that they don't really understand what Jesus is saying. This makes it hard for them to make a decision. Some of the disciples give up and leave Jesus. But Simon Peter and the other eleven close disciples decide to stay with Jesus. They say that they believe in him and will follow him, even though they don't understand everything he says.



Have you ever had to make a hard decision?

We sometimes have to make decisions without having all the information that we need. Many young people have just received GCSE examination results. But months ago, before they had these results, they had to decide whether they wanted to stay on at school or leave and get a job. The ones who wanted to stay at school had to decide which subjects they would study for the next couple of years. It was only when they got the results that they knew whether they had made the right decisions.

Sometimes following Jesus can be a bit like this. We don't have all the information. We don't fully understand what Jesus is saying. We don't fully understand God, or why certain things happen. If we are going to continue to follow Jesus we have to be like Simon Peter – we have to have faith and trust in God even when we are unsure. We have to trust that God loves us at all times.

Do you always understand what Jesus is saying? Or are there times when you would like to ask him questions? Or ask for more information? It's OK to have doubts. It's good to talk about your doubts and try to find out more about God and Jesus. Who could you talk to? Who would help you to decide whether to follow Jesus?

Activity

- Find a stone to decorate using some of the words that Simon Peter used, 'We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God'. Jesus gave Simon a new name – Peter. Peter means "rock". Jesus was saying that Peter would be a strong person with firm ideas. There is a certainty in Simon Peter's response – your stone can be a reminder of this. Leave it somewhere in your community for someone else to find.

Prayer

Praise God who accepts us as we are.

Praise God who loves us even when we have doubts.

Praise God who has called us to follow him.

Praise God now and for ever. Amen.