

### Teachers notes

Please note that this document contains 3 different versions of the "Exploring the Word" worksheet. Each version contains the same Gospel texts, Reflection and questions, but with a different configuration of "alternative views".

### activities

- ★ Conduct a survey in your local community seeking responses to Jesus' question, "Who do you say I am?"
- ★ Create a picture and word collage to answer Jesus' question, "Who do you say I am?"
- ★ Take four different responses to "Who do you say I am?" and develop a line of consequences that flow from the response. e.g. if one believes this ... then ... then ... then ...



Why might people have thought Jesus was John the Baptist or Elijah reincarnated?

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Why does Jesus want the disciples to admit what they believe about him?

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Why do you think Jesus was so abrupt with Peter, saying, "Get behind me, Satan"?

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What are the 'crosses' that followers of Jesus today are called to take up?

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Is there a particular 'cross' or burden that you can bear in order to better follow Jesus?

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### **gospel** Mk 8:27-35

Jesus and his disciples left for the villages 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.'

### **reflection**

"But you, who do you say I am?" This would have to be one of the most powerful questions of the gospels. It echoes down the centuries and is just as relevant today as it ever was. "Who do you say I am?" Our answer to that question is perhaps the most revealing statement of our faith. Our answer no doubt changes over time as we grow in understanding and as we experience the ups and downs of life, but nonetheless, just like Peter in the gospel passage, our answer remains a clear statement of our faith. "Who do you say I am?" Just a good guy who lived 2,000 years ago? A role model? A friend? God made flesh? The Word come down from heaven? Nobody? Everybody? Our saviour? An inspired man of God? The Messiah?

Perhaps you've never tried to actually answer the question yourself. It is a confronting question, "Who do you say I am?" It's confronting because, as Christian people, we believe that our actions are a reflection of our beliefs and values. It's confronting because whatever we say in answer to that question has implications for the way we live. "Who do you say I am?" You see, the question is in the present tense, not the past. It doesn't ask 'who do you say I was?'; it asks, "Who do you say I AM? The very question asks us to recognise that Jesus was not just some guy who lived 2,000 years ago but rather someone who continues to be a presence in our lives today. And he stands before each and every one of us today and asks that same, demanding, confronting, purposeful question: "Who do YOU say I am?"

### **scriptural** **context**

#### **A Turning Point**

*This passage forms a crucial turning point in the Gospel of Mark. It occurs at the very mid-point of the gospel – the end of chapter 8 in a 16 chapter gospel. From this point on the gospel takes a greater focus on what it means to be a disciple and Jesus' movement towards Jerusalem. This passage in which Peter professes his faith in Jesus as the Messiah is immediately followed by the account of the Transfiguration. From this point onwards, the gospel writer reveals the growing understanding of Jesus' identity that until now has been wrapped in secrecy.*

### **scriptural** **context**

#### **Sandwich technique**

*The Gospel of Mark is famous for a technique of 'sandwiching' stories or sections between two related events to bring what is sandwiched into greater focus. This gospel passage falls within a significant sandwich that runs from 8:22 (the healing of a blind man at Bethsaida) to 10:52 (the healing of blind Bartimaeus). The healings of blindness that surround the sandwich reflect the lack of 'sight' that the disciples have. The 'meat' of the sandwich is all about the disciples not really understanding Jesus' mission and what it means to truly be a disciple. Read the whole section from 8:22 – 10:52 and see how it works.*

- ❓ Why might people have thought Jesus was John the Baptist or Elijah reincarnated?
- ❓ Why does Jesus want the disciples to admit what they believe about him?
- ❓ Why do you think Jesus was so abrupt with Peter, saying, "Get behind me, Satan"?
- ❓ What are the 'crosses' that followers of Jesus today are called to take up?
- ❓ Is there a particular 'cross' or burden that you can bear in order to better follow Jesus?



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### **gospel focus**

#### **Peter's insight**

*When Peter answers Jesus' question he demonstrates the disciples' dawning awareness of Jesus' true identity. It is the first occasion that the disciples are called to own what they think about Jesus. However, when Jesus begins to spell out what being the Messiah really means – persecution and death – Peter tries to convince Jesus that he doesn't need to go down that path. Jesus turns on Peter and snaps, "Get behind me, Satan!" It is a reminder of the desert temptation Jesus had to face at the start of his ministry when he wrestled with what sort of messiah he was called to be.*

- ❏ Why might people have thought Jesus was John the Baptist or Elijah reincarnated?
- ❏ Why does Jesus want the disciples to admit what they believe about him?
- ❏ Why do you think Jesus was so abrupt with Peter, saying, "Get behind me, Satan"?
- ❏ What are the 'crosses' that followers of Jesus today are called to take up?
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