

## Warm Up

Have you ever walked into a room and seen a person and thought “Who is that?” You know that you know them but can’t place them. You know there is something about them that sets them apart. Share an example.

## Background and context

The context of this passage is that it marks a turning point in Jesus’ ministry. He had gone far north to Caesarea Philippi to teach His disciples and explain to them what was going to happen, although they failed to grasp it. Peter’s confession is famous but how we interpret Jesus’ response has been open to debate. Through His death, resurrection and pouring out of His Holy Spirit the Church would be born and would revolutionise the world we live in through actions of compassion and justice, bringing equality and unity. The Greek word **ecclesia** best describes the church as a body of believers called together for action. It goes way beyond the building which we often associate with the word church.

## Thinking it through: Main discussion/activity



**READ Matthew 16:13-20.** What are the surprising things in the passage? What is new? What don't you really understand?

1. How would you describe church? What is the nature or characteristics of “The Church”?
2. When Jesus declares “**on this rock...**” To what is He referring? Peter’s confession? Peter himself? Or something else?
3. How would you describe and/or understand the foundation principles of *The Church*?
4. As a gathered body of believers, what are we called to do?
5. What is Hades? Why has Hades got gates? To keep people in or keep people out?
6. How will the Church overcome the **gates of Hades**?
7. **V19.** What power and authority does *The Church* have?
8. What do you think it means to bind or loose? Who binds and who sets free?

## Discipleship and Application



9. If you are a Christian, you are part of the gathered community of Christ. How do we know what we are called to do?
10. What would you say to someone who thought that you could be a Christian without the Church? Why is the Church essential for a Christian?



## Try to leave 15-20 mins to talk about prayer needs of the group and to pray.

There are many creative ways of praying together: writing prayers, using candles as a focus, reading prayers or praying for each other in pairs.