

What material is your house made of? Most houses are built from wood, brick or stone. How do you build a house? The first and most important step is to build a foundation. A big machine called an excavator or *digger* is needed. This machine moves on wheels or tracks with a backhoe and a large scoop-shaped shovel. There is a cab for the driver to sit in and work the controls. The driver uses the controls to dig a big hole and move the dirt. Cement trucks mix and pour cement into the hole. This forms the bottom layer of the house. When the cement dries, it becomes as *hard as rock*. The foundation keeps the house from SINKING! Next, carpenters, plumbers and electricians build the rest of the house. Many people work together to build a house.

Joseph, Jesus' stepfather, was a carpenter. He was *very* good at building things. What things could Joseph build? He built houses, sheds, tables, and chairs. He made the tools he would need to do his work. Joseph taught Jesus how to work with wood and build things, too. When Jesus grew up, he built something *more important* than tables and chairs. He built the Catholic Church. He *didn't* use a hammer or nails to build his Church, though. So, how did he build it? Jesus built the Church by choosing twelve men called the *apostles*. One of the apostles was named Simon. Simon was a fisherman when Jesus called him to follow. Jesus changed Simon's name to Peter, whose name means *rock* in Aramaic. Peter was the first apostle to BELIEVE that Jesus was the SON OF GOD! Jesus said to him, "*You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.*" Mt 16:18.

Ask children to repeat this verse and make a power fist on the word "rock".

This Bible verse tells us that Jesus chose Peter to be the *first* leader of His Church. In the same

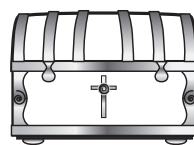
way a house needs a *strong* foundation before the walls can go up; the church needed a *strong* leader to teach us about our faith. After Jesus died and rose to heaven, Peter became our *first* Pope, the head of the Catholic Church.

Today, over one billion people belong to the Catholic Church. For over 2,000 years, popes have been elected to follow in Saint Peter's footsteps. Who is our Pope today? Yes, Pope Benedict! Why do we call the pope, *pope*? The word pope comes from the Greek word, *pappas*.

Ask children to repeat the word *pappas*.

Pappas means 'papa' or father. Some of you might call your father papa. *Your* fathers love you, pray for you, and teach you right from wrong. Pope Benedict is our spiritual father on earth, or *papa* to all Catholics in the whole wide world. He guides the Church in our faith through the POWER of the Holy Spirit. In America, we speak English, but Latin is the worldwide language of the Church. We can shout, *Viva il Papa!* In Latin this means, *Long live the Pope!*

Shout *Viva il Papa!* three times.



TREASURE CHEST

Explain that each day, an item will be placed in the Treasure Chest as a reminder of the lesson.

Call on a volunteer to place a rock in the Treasure Chest to remember Saint Peter, the first leader of the Church.



SAINT CENTERED STORY

Read:

St. Jerome-Lion Turned Lamb (p.2)

Say: Saints are special friends of God. They are holy people who loved God with all their hearts.

Today, you are going to hear a story about Saint Jerome. Can you say his name for me? Before Jerome became a saint, he learned everything he could about the Bible. Jerome understood that the Bible was a great treasure. Pope Damasus gave Jerome an important job to do. Listen carefully to find out what the pope asked Jerome to do.

