

LESSON FIVE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES: The Church, the Pope and Me

AIM:**TIME: 60 minutes****General:** To bring home to the children that-

- 1] In His love for us, God has placed the Holy Father with the bishops as head of the Church.
- 2] We are the body of the Church (and of Christ). By willingly obeying the Church's teachings, we allow God to bless us and others.
- 3] This same structure and order are present in a human body- (brain- different organs) and in a human family (Father- other members)

Personal: To lead each child to accept and submit to the authority of the Church as to Christ, and to trust God to do what is best for him.**Text used:** 1 Corinthians 12:12-19; 27-28.**I. STARTER:** [5 minutes]

[A mock argument is held: The teacher acts (make sure the students know that you are not serious, but acting like a teenager who doesn't believe in obeying the Church!) and the students come up and try and convince her. If you prefer, you could let a 'smart' student do the teacher's part. Let one representative come up from each row and form a team. The argument might go like this-

Teacher: I don't think I need to obey the Church's teaching. I can decide what is good and bad myself.**Student:** But you are only a teenager...maybe you will make the wrong decisions.**Teacher:** But how do I know the Church is right?**Student:** You should obey. What is wrong with the teachings?**Teacher:** They are too difficult! Every Sunday, go to Church! Why can't I pray at home? And go to confession to a priest! I don't want to tell my sins to others. I can tell it to God quietly!**Student:** It's not so difficult to go to Church. You should be humble. The priest who hears your confession stands for Jesus.**Teacher:** Anyway, I believe in freedom. I want to do what I want without anyone interfering.After 5-7 minutes stop the argument and say- "Lets stop here and see if we can discover some solution as a class."**II. DEVELOPMENT:** [20 minutes]

Let us have a short game, a kind of experiment, to help us solve this big question about the Church. (Divide the class into 2 - 4 groups dependent on the total number of students. (You could separate girls and boys!)) Take them to an open space and allot a place for each group-facing each other. Appoint a leader for each group. Instruct them as follows-

You have 3 minutes to do this task. You have to build a human pyramid in the given time using all your members. At the whistle all must stop moving.

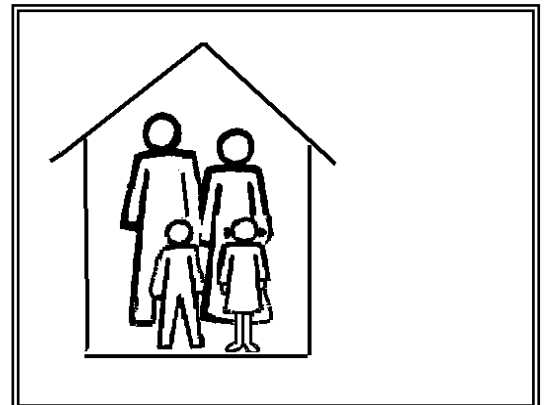
[Be strict about the time! After the display, ask each team why they did/ did not manage to achieve their pyramid. Using their own observations, stress the following-]

SOME GROUPS DID NOT MANAGE BECAUSE:

- People didn't co-operate.
- There were too many ideas and people got confused.
- Some didn't want to be on the bottom row.
- Some were scared of being on top, and falling down.

SOME WERE SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE:

- All listened to the leader.
- They accepted the position given to them, even though it



was difficult.

So we see pretty clearly that even to do a simple task you need a head and you also need people who are ready to obey. Can you give me any other everyday examples of the same principle? [Draw on the blackboard]

- The example of a human body: The brain sends out commands and co-ordinates all the parts. Because of this co-ordination, the whole body is healthy- is fed, gets exercise etc.
- A father who is the head of the family. Think of a really happy family, where things are running smoothly- you will find that there is respect for the father and obedience.

On the other hand, especially in some developed countries, each one thinks of himself/ herself first. People say- I must fulfil my needs and ambitions; everyone acts independently. Families break-up, people end up unhappy. Lets see what the Word of God has to say about it-

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:12–19; 27-28.

God in His great wisdom (the same wise God who made the Universe, the world with everything perfectly balanced) has planned His Church to be a body- with a head and all the parts working in submission and unity. Surely his plan is a good one, for from just a gathering of people at Pentecost, this Church has grown and spread all over the world and is still alive after 2000 years!

When Jesus told Peter that he would build His Church on him, he promised- ‘The gates of Hell will not prevail over it (last week’s reading-Matt 16:18). We believe, not in the person God has put as head, but in God’s faithfulness in keeping His promise. He is with His Church. God knows that we are weak and foolish (It is good if **we** realise it, too!) He has not left us alone to find out how to live, what is right, what is the best way to grow in holiness. Instead of leaving us orphans, He has provided us with a family, a father. Let us thank Him for His wonderful care of us.

III. PRAYER: [5 minutes]

Let the students be silent for a while and reflect on all they have discovered... Invite them to pray from their hearts- thanking God for this family and the Holy Father, and asking the Holy Spirit to teach them to obey the Church

Sing Together: ‘**Though We Are Many, We Are One Body.**’ OR ‘**Bind Us Together**’

IV. ACTIVITY: [30 minutes]

Let the students work in groups and make posters about Pope John Paul II :His words, his life, what people say about him. Put in photos etc. Many magazines and newspapers have articles on him. The Time magazine named him ‘Man of the Year’ some years ago. They could base the poster on the present Pope]

Give prizes to all those who complete their posters. Make sure these are displayed.]

YOU WILL NEED:

Good News New Testaments; Magazines- religious and others with articles of the Holy Father; chart paper; scissors; gum; crayons; markers; felt pens.