

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

AGAIN & AGAIN, WE ARE CALLED TO LISTEN

MARK 8:31-9:8 | PSALM 22:23-31

Engage: *Start speaking in an inaudible whisper (or leave your mute button on if you're on Zoom!). You might say something like, "I'm so glad you're here to play and learn today!" Or something silly like, "I bought a pet shark yesterday." When a child says they can't hear you (or after a short sentence if pre-recording a video), say, "Oh, you couldn't hear me? What did you think I might be saying?" (Possible answers: "Hello" "How are you" etc.) "Why do you think I might say that?" ("Because that's what you usually say" "That's how you start a conversation" etc.) Ask, "Are there times when you know what a friend or family member is going to say because they've said it before? Are there times when your family members or teachers tell you to listen because they don't want you to miss something important?"*

Explain: The disciples weren't always the best listeners, and sometimes Jesus had to repeat himself over and over when they weren't listening. In today's Bible story, God finally had to tell them outright, "This is my Son, the Beloved—listen to him!" Sometimes we don't listen as closely as we should because we're excited about something else. Sometimes we don't listen because we think we know what the person is going to say. Sometimes we don't *want* to hear what they're going to say. Sometimes we just aren't paying attention. But when we don't listen to important people in our lives, whether they're our family or teachers or friends, we miss out. They might be telling us exciting news or giving us good instructions. And we also need to listen to God's word, to the things Jesus said and the things God spoke through the prophets and the things that the Holy Spirit is still speaking to us in our hearts.

Pray: Dear God, thank you for all the ways you speak to us through other people, through your Word, and through our own hearts. Help us to listen carefully. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Play: For an extension activity, children can play the game of "Telephone," whispering a message in a chain, from one child to the other, to see how the original message changes if we aren't careful listeners. For one child and one adult, or for a Zoom-friendly activity, you might try the following adaptation: Say a sentence on mute (or silently mouth a sentence) and see if the child(ren) can guess what you said.