

# Learning Together

*A resource to support parents as they help their children grow in faith.*

## About this Resource:

*Learning Together* is a resource from the Sunday School Design Team, containing background information for parents and details on how to help children in grades 1-6 get the most out of Sunday School. "The Road to Emmaus" Rotation begins April 27, 2014.

Sunday School is from 10:00 - 10:55 a.m. All children are welcome! More information about Children's Ministries at Gloria Dei may be found on our website: [www.gloriadeikids.org](http://www.gloriadeikids.org).

## The Road to Emmaus

*"...he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him." Luke 24:30-31a*



Emmaus was "a village about seven miles from Jerusalem," but its exact site is uncertain. The friends leaving town were disciples, but not among the twelve. Luke tells us only the name of Cleopas. The unnamed disciple reminds us that there were many disciples whom we have not known by name and who were devastated by Jesus' execution.

Picture the two disciples in animated debate as they travel. Realize the depth of their despair: these two have just seen all their fresh new hope for the arrival of God's kingdom utterly dashed and their own lives put at risk.

"Jesus himself came near and went with them." The fact that Jesus walked with them when all the followers had tried to stand at a distance from the events of the crucifixion (Luke 23:49) indicates forgiveness. We may abandon the Christ; Christ does not abandon us.

How can we explain their failure to recognize Jesus? Perhaps we must assume that he was simply the last possible person they expected to see. And we have to wonder at his own incredible restraint. Who among us would not have been tempted to jump out of the bushes and cry, "Hey fellas, look? It's me. I'm alive." But Jesus, consummate teacher, patiently waits for his students to make this ultimate discovery on their own.

## At a Glance

### Luke 24:13-35

The Emmaus story takes place on the same day as Jesus' tomb is discovered to be empty. People are heading home following the Passover. The disciples are upset, confused, and scared. Jesus, had been crucified and now his tomb is empty!



A stranger (Jesus) joins Cleopas, and incredibly, "knows" nothing about the recent events. The stranger patiently teaches the disciples from scripture as they walk along and then as the stranger breaks bread, and they recognize him, Jesus disappears.

The disciples rush back to Jerusalem to tell the others. When our hearts burn within us, we must go and tell also; we can do no other!

*How often do we not recognize Jesus on our own road? How are we compelled to tell others the Good News?!*

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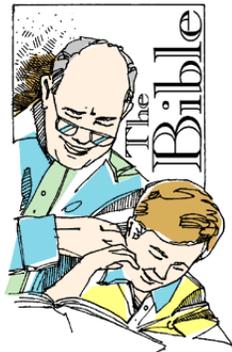
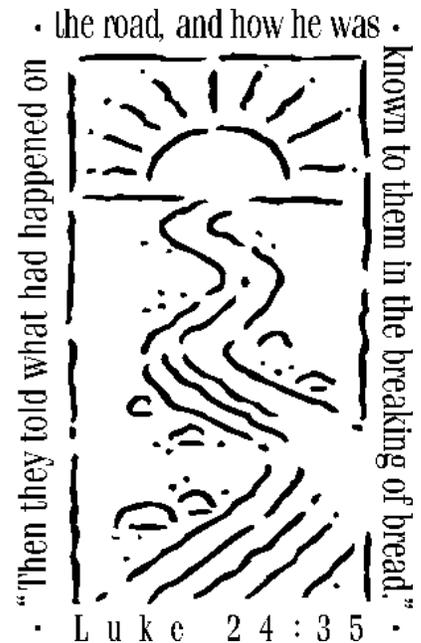
The stranger asks what they were discussing, and Cleopas replies with apparent sarcasm, "Are **you** the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place in these days?" (Emphasis added.) Such irony!

Thomas Groome then notes that the stranger urges the disciples to speak from their own experiences and disappointments. This is Jesus the Teacher leading his students to explore and articulate their understanding of what has happened. Sometimes we do not know what we know until we put it into words.

They had known Jesus as a prophet mighty in word and deed. They recount how the leaders handed him over to be crucified. They speak of their confusion over reports of the women seeing an empty tomb and visions of angels. The stranger claims that the crucifixion was not a failure, but a necessity if the Messiah were to enter into glory. Imagine the disciples transfixed by Jesus' interpretation of all the things about himself throughout the Hebrew scriptures.

When the two arrive at their lodging (possibly a home or an inn), the stranger appears to plan to travel farther. They plead with him to accept their hospitality, to be their guest. (Remember the importance of hospitality in this culture.) The stranger then becomes the host. Boldly he "took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them" -- and in that act they recognized the Christ.

Just as soon as they recognized the risen Lord, he was gone. His work with them was complete. Perhaps his immediate disappearance is a clue that he will not be "with" them in the same way he was with them before his crucifixion.



## PEOPLE OF THE WORD

### **Fellowship** ("communion" with others)

The pair was sharing together supporting one another in their grief and it was in welcoming another into the fellowship that the great good news was revealed. The meal and the talking together point us to seeking the fellowship of God's people when we are mourning, in doubt and seeking after God and God's answers.

### **Word and Sacrament**

In hearing the Scriptures the two felt "our hearts burning within us." In the breaking of the bread their eyes were open. Making the connection between the acts of the Lord's Supper and the word proclaimed in worship dramatically illustrates who we are as a worshipping people.

Earlier the disciples had told him that the hour was too late to continue his journey past Emmaus, but now they make an even more dangerous journey of their own -- reversing their steps to return the entire seven miles to Jerusalem in the dark. They are unable to contain their awe and excitement, so eager are they to tell "what happened on the road and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread."

### **Evangelism**

Traveling the Emmaus Road with Jesus cannot be just a personal journey. The disciples must share the Good News with others. Our knowledge, experience, and relationship with God are not just ends to themselves but impel us to share the Good News. The season of Eastertide is a great time of year to heighten the children's awareness that we have Good News to share with the world.

*Written by Anne Camp, for the Workshop Rotation Model Writing Team @ [www.rotation.org](http://www.rotation.org)*

## Connecting this Story at Home...

- Have/help your child(ren) look up this story in the Bible. They should be able to identify that this story is from the New Testament, and takes place in one of the four gospels: Luke 24.
- Read through the story together and ask your child(ren) to retell this story in their own words.
- Help them recite the memory verse and reference (See Below).
- Help your child make the connection between Jesus revealing himself in the breaking of the bread in this story and how he continues to be revealed to us in the sacrament of communion today.
- Talk with your family about ways in which we might recognize Jesus today in everyone we encounter.
- Explore the idea of welcoming strangers: How do we greet and share our story with them?
- Evangelism is a big word. How do we respond to it? When we get all fired up about what we've been learning - when our hearts burn within us - we must tell others! Your child(ren) will be bringing home a story telling kit from their scavenger hunt. Let them tell you and someone else the story.



### *Memory Verse:*

“When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.” Luke 30-31a

## A Walk to Emmaus..... Sunday, June 1

Children in grades 1-6 will be walking to the homes of Gloria Dei members who live in the neighborhood. On their way, they will be joined by newcomers and have the opportunity to tell them the story of Jesus and the events that took place during Holy Week and Easter.

As in the story, we will break bread and also have the opportunity to read from the family Bible before heading back to church.

Please be on time. Children should meet in Luther Hall by 10:00 a.m. on June 1. We will return back to Gloria Dei by 10:50 a.m. Please contact Beth Tobin or Pastor Molly for more information.

