



LAW, GRACE, AND WISDOM:  
OUR FAITH, GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

## Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13–35

- Road to Emmaus—Art Workshop
- Road to Emmaus—Audiovisual Workshop
- Road to Emmaus—Computer Workshop
- Road to Emmaus—Drama/Storytelling Workshop
- Road to Emmaus—Games and Puzzles Workshop
- Road to Emmaus—Music and Worship Workshop
- Road to Emmaus—Bonus: Cooking Workshop

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### Biblical Background

It is a Sunday evening, and two disciples, deep in conversation about the strange events of the past week, are on a journey. A stranger happens upon them, and asks what they are discussing . . .

So begins this post-resurrection story that is found only in the gospel of Luke. It is a narrative that possesses all the literary elements of a good story—movement, emotion, suspense, and an exciting climax—set within the framework of what, at its outset, was expected to be a simple journey from one town to another.

The two disciples walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus, slowly and hopelessly, and talk about all that has happened in recent days. Most likely, they are still in shock over the tragic things that happened to a man they love, respected, and believed in. They encounter a fellow traveler, and the readers of the story are told what the disciples do not know. The traveler is Jesus himself. As they walk, Jesus teaches them the meaning of the Scriptures. They arrive at their destination and invite him to stay for dinner. He accepts their hospitality and then, as Luke explains: “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 24:30–31). At this, Jesus disappears . . . before they have a chance to ask any questions or make any professions. But they turn to one another and acknowledge that they had a funny feeling, the kind you have when, in the presence of the familiar or the extraordinary, you sense that something bigger is going on. They say, “Were not our hearts burning within us . . . (v. 32)?” The rest of their words were not yet formulated because what they were experiencing was still beyond comprehension: Easter, resurrection, new life, and hope. But they felt it. They recognized it in the breaking of the bread, the very act Jesus told them to remember him by. They felt compelled to return to Jerusalem, in spite of the late hour, anxious and excited to share their experience with the other disciples.

This story teaches us about what it means to be disciples of the risen Christ. Word and Sacrament, hospitality and witness, revelation and remembrance are all important themes in this unit’s story and in the life of the Christian believer.

### Theological Connections

Perhaps the most important thing the story of the “Road to Emmaus” teaches us is how it is we get to know the living Christ. What we learn from the story is that getting to know Christ involves both divine and human action.

Central to the story is the revelation of God present in both Word and Sacrament, the two critical elements of Christian worship. When the two disciples met Jesus on the road, they did not immediately recognize him. Only after he interpreted the Scriptures to them and shared a meal where he blessed and broke the bread did they recognize him. Like the Emmaus disciples, believers ever since have encountered, experienced, and recognized Jesus by reverently receiving Word and Sacrament.

Even with God’s revelatory acts, the disciples could have missed the opportunity to recognize Jesus. Had they not been open to hearing what Jesus had to say on the road, and had they not taken the initiative of extending an invitation to him to stay for dinner, Jesus could have gone on by with them none the wiser. Like Abraham and Sarah, rushing to welcome the strangers who turn out to be angels bringing the promise of Isaac’s birth, the two disciples learned the truth of Paul’s teaching, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:2).

We can never be sure where we will meet Christ. However, we can be sure that if we neglect to show hospitality to others, if we do not open ourselves to meeting Christ in unexpected people and places, we may miss an experience of the presence of God. When we do open ourselves to such experiences, we may find the experience so powerful that, like



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the two disciples, we are compelled to tell others about it. If others are to learn about God's revelatory acts, Christian believers must witness to their own experiences, as the two disciples on the road to Emmaus did.

### Educational Emphases

A key part of our task in Christian education is to simply let children begin to learn what is in the Bible. The "Road to Emmaus" story is an interesting, engaging story about Jesus that children will enjoy hearing and learning. If the children, particularly the younger children, leave this unit with no more than an ability to tell this story in their own words, then it will have been time well spent. To learn that much means the children have learned something about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

If you want to go deeper, even with the younger children, a good place to start is with the hospitality of the two disciples and what they gained by their willingness to extend hospitality to a stranger. In working with the older children, you can also make the connection between how the two disciples experienced Jesus through Word and Sacrament and what we do in worship each week. If they've ever found themselves wondering why we do what we do in worship, this story gives them one answer—to get to know our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

### Take Note

In our day and age, when so much is made of "stranger danger," the biblically prominent theme of extending hospitality to strangers gives parents and Christian educators pause. Although it is important to confirm what children have learned from parents and teachers about never going anywhere with an adult they do not know, you can still include the theme of hospitality to strangers by highlighting the differences between what the Bible is talking about and what they have learned at school and at home.

For example, this can be an opportunity to teach children about some of the differences between the

society in which we live and what life was like before and during the time of Jesus. In a place and time where there were no restaurants or hotels, the only places travelers were able to eat and stay the night were in other people's homes, and people weren't always traveling in places where they knew other people and could rely on friends or family. The entire culture was dependent on the expectation that people would open their homes to strangers passing through who were in need of food or shelter.

*Note:* Even in biblical times, this would have been the responsibility of the adults in the household and not the children.

Although that is not the case for the society in which we live, we can still learn from this story and from others in the Bible that it is important to welcome people who are different from us. Even though that does *not* mean that a child should ever go somewhere alone with an adult he or she does not know, it does mean that the children should be friendly to a new student in their class at school, or stick up for a child who is picked on by others in the class. The presence of Christ may be found in that person, just as we experience Christ in our best friend or loved one. May you and the children you teach get to know Christ in new and exciting ways as you embark on this journey of the road to Emmaus.

### Welcoming All Children

We encourage all leaders to consider how each unit and each workshop might affect the learning of children with special needs in your churches. Because these issues vary widely from church to church and from child to child, rather than offering general guidelines here that may or may not address your concerns, we encourage you to seek assistance from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Disability Consultants. Go to [www.pcusa.org/phewa/consult.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/phewa/consult.htm) for contact information for consultants in areas of hearing, mobility, vision, and developmental disabilities, who are available by phone or e-mail to assist you with any questions or concerns you might have.



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### Suggested Supplemental Resources

#### Computer Software

Microsoft Windows “paint” program *Kid Pix Studio Deluxe*, 3rd edition, available from Sunday Software, [www.sundaysoftware.com](http://www.sundaysoftware.com) or 1-800-678-1948.

Discovery’s *Life of Christ* for older children, available from Sunday Software, [www.sundaysoftware.com](http://www.sundaysoftware.com) or 1-800-678-1948.

#### Books

Milton, Ralph. *The Family Story Bible*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.

#### Audiovisual

*The Miracle Maker—The Story of Jesus* by Family Home Entertainment. VHS tape or DVD, available from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). For all ages.

*Fish Eyes: Emmaus Road/Inside the Fish* (Tape 7, Episodes 13 and 14). VHS tape (Item #V984), available from [www.gospeldirect.com](http://www.gospeldirect.com) or 1-800-467-7353. For older children.

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### Main Idea

Two disciples walking on a road meet a stranger who teaches them Scripture. They share a meal together and realize that it was Jesus all along.

### Something to Remember

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures (Luke 24:27).

**Question 28.** How do we know that Jesus is Lord?

After he died and was raised from the dead, he appeared to his disciples, both women and men. He revealed himself to them as our living Lord and Savior. Through the Bible, he continues to reveal himself to us today.

—*Belonging to God: A First Catechism*

### Objectives of the Workshop

The children will have the opportunity to:

- Hear the story of Jesus' appearance to two disciples after the resurrection.
- Consider ways we can show hospitality and welcome "the stranger" at church.
- Identify ways that we can get to know Jesus today.

### Things to Prepare

- Get approval from the appropriate committee to put the children's art on the inside covers of your congregation's "friendship pads." If your congregation does not use "friendship pads," choose another way to use the children's computer art to welcome people. (Assemble)
- Computer Teaching Tips:* Have the computers turned on and the appropriate software ready to use before children arrive. Waiting for a computer to boot up wastes valuable teaching time. It is essential that teachers be completely familiar with the software, including the "paint" program. It is also very helpful to create shortcuts on the children's desktops for frequently used programs. To do this on a P.C., simply right click on the item from the start-up menu, and select "create shortcut" from the menu. To create a shortcut on a MAC, locate the program, and drag the icon for the program onto the dock. This will make it much easier for the children to move from one piece of software to another.

### You Will Need

#### Assemble

- Microsoft Word "paint" program, *Kid Pix Studio Deluxe, 3rd edition* (available from Sunday Software, [www.sundaysoftware.com](http://www.sundaysoftware.com) or 1-800-678-1948)
- White computer paper
- Prepared frames
- Felt-tipped markers or crayons (*optional*)

#### Bible Study

- Bibles, New Revised Standard Version or Contemporary English Version
- The Family Story Bible* by Ralph Milton (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997)

#### Claim

- Software such as *Kid Pix Studio Deluxe, 3rd edition* (see You Will Need/Assemble) (*younger children*)
- Discovery's Life of Christ* (available from Sunday Software, [www.sundaysoftware.com](http://www.sundaysoftware.com) or 1-800-678-1948) (*older children*)
- Newsprint or chalkboard
- Felt-tipped markers or chalk

#### Depart

- No materials needed



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### **A**ssemble: God Calls Us Together

Before the workshop, get approval to put the children's art on the inside covers of your congregation's friendship pads.

### Friendship Pads

Greet the children as they arrive. Invite the children to create art for the inside covers of the friendship pads used in the sanctuary. (*Note: If your congregation does not use friendship pads, choose another way to use the children's computer art to welcome people.*) Tell the children that, in the story for this unit, two disciples welcomed Jesus and asked him to join them for a meal. Making art for the friendship pads is one way that the children can make people feel welcome at your church. Talk with the children about what pictures might depict "welcome." Let children decide if they want to create a "welcoming" picture with markers or crayons or with a creative art program (like *Kid Pix Studio Deluxe, 3rd edition*) on the computer. Give each child who will be drawing his or her own artwork a piece of white computer paper and felt-tipped markers or crayons. Direct the other children to the computers and have them use *Kid Pix Studio Deluxe, 3rd edition* to create their artwork. Around the edges of the frame, or across the top and bottom of the frame, the children should write one of the following phrases (or come up with your own):

- Welcome to God's house!
- May you see the face of Christ here.
- Peace to all who enter here.
- God is love!

### Opening Prayer

Say the following prayer: "Eye-opening God, may we see you today in the faces of friends and family, and may we remember to look for you in the face of the stranger. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

### **B**ible Study: We Hear God's Word

#### The Road to Emmaus

Gather the children away from the computers for Bible Study. You may choose to sit on a rug on the floor, or even go to another room if you have one available. Open your Bible to Luke 24:13–35. For younger children, tell the story in your own words or use the story from *The Family Story Bible*. For older children, read the story together. Ponder with the children the following questions:

- How do you think the disciples felt after Jesus died?
- How do you think they felt when they recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread?
- The Bible says that Jesus took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it. Can you remember another time when Jesus did this? At the feeding of the 5,000 and the Last Supper, he did the same thing. What does this remind you of?

### **C**laim: We Respond to God's Word

#### Traveling the Road (younger children)

Using *Kid Pix Studio Deluxe, 3rd edition* or another creative art software, have the children create a picture of the two disciples meeting someone on the road as they travel back to Jerusalem after recognizing Jesus in Emmaus. Ponder the following questions with the children before they create their pictures:

- Who is the person they meet?
- What do they tell this person?
- How does the person respond to the story they tell?
- Does he or she believe what they say?

Have the children include their thoughts in the pictures they create. You may need extra adult assistance to type the words for the younger children.



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Now have the children create another picture, this time placing themselves in the picture with Jesus walking down a road. Think about these questions with the children before they create their pictures:

- What does the road look like?
- Where does the road go?
- Is it smooth? bumpy? flat? hilly?
- How do they travel?
- Who is talking? What are they talking about?
- What is a question they would like to ask Jesus?

Have the children include their question for Jesus in their pictures. Affirm that although we don't know all the answers, we can trust God with our questions.

### Traveling the Road (older children)

Have the children open the Discovery's *Life of Christ* software on the computers. Once they have opened the software, they will either need to create a new explorer name or choose an existing name. Direct them to select "Continue Exploration." (If they choose "New Exploration," they will have to watch an introduction. Leaders should be familiar enough with the software that they will be able to show the students how to use it instead of using the introduction.) Once you are in the "Professor's Office," click on the "Orange Crate" that is sitting on the right-hand side of the office. This will take you to a set of lessons. Tell the students that you are going to compare two stories about Jesus. They are both about people who have a difficult time recognizing Jesus as God's son. The first story takes place early in Jesus' ministry. Tell the students to select "Introducing the Son of God" and then choose Lesson 15, "Jesus Tells His Secret in His Hometown." Have them follow the lesson and take the quiz. As a class, discuss and write down responses to the five "W" questions: who (who are the individuals in the story?), what (what happens?), when, where, and why? Pose the

following questions: Why did they have such a difficult time "seeing" Jesus as God's son? Do you think anyone "saw" him in his hometown?

Explore the second story. Click on "Jesus is Alive Forever and Ever" and then on Lesson 35, "The Resurrected Messiah Visits Friends and Followers." Follow the lesson and take the quiz together as a class, discussing the answers as you go. Again discuss and write down responses to the five "W" questions: who, what, when, where, and why? Pose the following questions: How are these two stories similar? How are they different? What about the endings? How is Jesus walking alongside us in our journeys today? How do we recognize Jesus?

*Note:* Children as young as third grade can use Discovery's *Life of Christ* software. Instead of comparing the two stories, have them explore the lesson on the road to Emmaus only and discuss the questions.

### Clean Up

Have children help put away any felt-tipped markers, papers, and Bibles. Show them how to remove the software from the computers and put the CDs away.

### Depart: God Sends Us into the World Walking with Jesus

Gather the children in a circle and talk for a few moments about how the two disciples in the story were surprised to discover that the person they traveled with was actually Jesus, the risen Christ. Imagine together about what that experience may have been like. In our lives we meet and know people who behave in Christlike ways. But this is a story of people who actually walked with Jesus. Can you imagine what it would be like to walk with Jesus? Ask the children to think about what they would ask Jesus. What would they talk about with him if they had the opportunity?



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### Pass-along Blessing

Conclude your time together by turning to the child on your right and saying, “(Name), Christ be with you.” Have them turn and say the same thing to the person on their right and so on around the circle until all have been blessed.

### Evaluate

Were you familiar enough with the software to be able to assist the children? Were the children comfortable enough with the software so that they could do the activities?

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