



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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**Publisher:** Sandra Albritton Moak

**Writers:** **Leader to Leader**—Cindy Cushman  
**Art Workshop**—Meg Elliott Rift  
**Audiovisual Workshop**—Jeanne McIver  
**Computer Workshop**—Cathy Caldwell Hoop  
**Drama/Storytelling Workshop**—Rita Odom  
**Games and Puzzles Workshop**—Terry Biers  
**Music and Worship Workshop**—Martha Bess DeWitt  
**Bonus: Cooking Workshop**—Christina Berry

**Writing Team Manager:** Meg Elliott Rift

**Editor:** Betsy Ensign-George

**Art Director:** Jeanne Williams

**Designer:** Jeanne Williams

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Leader to Leader

Games and  
Puzzles Workshop



### 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



## Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13–35  
Leader to Leader

Games and  
Puzzles Workshop



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.



## Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13–35  
Leader to Leader

Games and  
Puzzles Workshop



### 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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## Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13–35

Games and  
Puzzles Workshop



### 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:

- Find Luke 24:13–35 in their Bibles.
- Retell the story of the road to Emmaus.
- Consider what it means to show hospitality; consider ways to show hospitality.

### Things to Prepare

- If you plan on taking the children for a walk around the neighborhood, check with the appropriate person about permission to take them from the church building. Take a walk around the neighborhood to become acquainted with the area. Determine the time it will take to fit this activity into your allotted workshop time. Recruit adult volunteers to go along as helpers. (Claim)
- If you plan on walking around the church property, take a walk around the building and grounds to become familiar with the property. Determine the time it will take to fit this activity into your allotted workshop time. (Claim)

### You Will Need

#### Assemble

- Magnifying glasses
- Binoculars
- Paper
- Pencils

#### Bible Study

- Bibles
- The Family Story Bible* by Ralph Milton (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997) (*younger children*)

#### Claim

- No materials needed

#### Depart

- No materials needed



## Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13–35

Games and  
Puzzles Workshop



### **A**ssemble: We Gather in God's Name

#### **Do You See What I See or Hear or Smell?**

Greet the children as they arrive and invite them to explore the meeting space with their eyes, ears, and nose. Explain to the children that they will be exploring their world to find things they might not ordinarily pay attention to. Encourage them to do this as quietly as possible so that they might be able to hear something they do not ordinarily hear.

Invite the children to use the magnifying glasses and binoculars that you have provided. Encourage them to look high and low, in cracks and crevices, around corners, and on themselves. Some suggestions of things to look for: objects with words, particularly in small print; floor space with dust or dirt particles; carpet with pile; walls with cracks or other texture; the hands, arms, or faces of participants to see hairs and pores; windows, panes, sills, or screens that might hold little treasures; clothing or other fabric; or other places in the classroom where children can explore the world of small objects. With binoculars, look out a window into areas where children might see birds, insects, squirrels, or people.

Encourage the children to listen carefully and to smell objects. Have the children make a list of things they see, hear, or smell. Allow time for the children to explore. Invite the children to share their findings with the class.

Discuss how we often miss seeing or hearing things because we are too busy doing other things or because we simply are not paying attention. Remind them that there is much more going on around them all the time than they are aware of.

Express your appreciation for what the children have shared. Open your time together with a prayer.

### **O**pening Prayer

Say the following prayer: "Dear God, we thank you for such an exciting world where there is so much to see and hear and do. Help us to be more aware of what is going on around us so that we do not miss the excitement, the activity, and the needs. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

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

#### **Bible Pursuit**

To help children be familiar with their Bibles, play a brief game of Bible Pursuit. Bible Pursuit is a game in which the teacher distributes a Bible to each child and then calls out a book of the Bible. The children "take off in hot pursuit" to see who can open their Bible to that book and then be first to call out the page on which the book begins. A further challenge, particularly for older children, is for the teacher to call out a book and chapter *or* a book, chapter, and verse. In the former case, the person finding the chapter first will be asked to read the first verse aloud. To encourage all children to participate, ask children who have been the first to find a book and respond correctly to wait to call out again until all children have had a chance. Have the last book or chapter and verse called out be from the Scripture passage for the session, Luke 24:13–35.

#### **Tell the Story**

Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about the time right after Jesus died. In this story (Luke 24:13–35), two people are taking a walk. As they walk, they talk about what happened to Jesus, and they are sad. With younger children, you may choose to read the story in *The Family Story Bible*. With older children, invite the children to read the passage, taking turns as they feel comfortable reading. As the story is read, invite the children to listen for what happened to make the two walkers happy again.



## Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13–35

Games and  
Puzzles Workshop



### Wondering

When the story is finished, use some of the following discussion points to explore the story with the children. When necessary, have the children refer back to the story in their Bibles or have them reread the passage.

#### Younger children

- I wonder why the two travelers were so sad at the beginning of the story.
- I wonder why the two travelers did not recognize the stranger.
- I wonder how the stranger/Jesus felt as he listened to the two travelers talking.
- I wonder how the two travelers felt when the stranger explained everything to them.
- I wonder who the other person was who was walking with Cleopas.
- I wonder why the travelers invited the stranger to stay with them.
- I wonder what it was that made the two travelers finally recognize Jesus.
- I wonder what the two travelers did after Jesus left.
- I wonder what the two travelers told the other disciples about what happened.
- I wonder what I would have said or done if I had been there . . . on the walk, at the meal, going back to tell the disciples, being with the disciples again.

#### Older children

- When did this story take place?
- Where were the two travelers going when they were joined by the stranger?
- Why do you imagine the travelers were leaving Jerusalem?
- What were the two travelers talking about when they were joined by the stranger?
- What was the reaction of the two travelers when the stranger asked them what they were talking about?
- How did the stranger join in on the conversation?

- As the travelers neared their home, what was the stranger going to do (before they invited him to stay with them)?
- Why do you suppose the travelers invited the stranger to stay with them?
- What might have happened had the travelers not strongly urged Jesus to stay with them?
- If you were walking along a road and a stranger joined you and your friend in conversation, would you invite the stranger to stay with you? Why or why not? (Talk about the differences in the times/cultures.)
- What was it that made the travelers finally recognize Jesus?
- Why do you think Jesus immediately vanished after they recognized him? What do you think that means?
- Is there a time when you can remember Jesus or God being close to you as Jesus was close to the two travelers? Explain.
- What two things did Jesus do with the travelers that are similar to what we do in worship? (1. *Jesus explained the Scriptures to them, and we hear the Word proclaimed.* 2. *Jesus broke bread with them, and we participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.*)
- Are there other Bible stories you might remember when people did not recognize God or Jesus in their midst? (For example, *Moses: God spoke from a burning bush; Saul/Paul: Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus; Elijah: the still small voice of God; the story of the Good Samaritan; all the postresurrection appearances.*)

Explain that sometimes we simply do not notice or recognize things or people in our midst. When we are busy and focusing on one thing, we often do not see something or someone else. The two travelers did not recognize the risen Christ until he broke the bread. In *their* act of hospitality—inviting the stranger to stay with them—the risen Christ was able to be recognized. Jesus taught us that God is with us always, whether we notice or not. Remind



## Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13–35

## Games and Puzzles Workshop



the children that God loves them as God has always loved them, and God will be with them—and with you—as God has always promised.

### **Claim:** We Respond to God's Word

Before the workshop decide which of the following three activities you want the children to do—"I Spy" (for younger children), "Walk the Neighborhood" (for all ages), and/or "Walk on Church Property" (for all ages). Choose the appropriate activity(ies) for your group setting. Obtain permission for children to leave the workshop site, if necessary. Recruit adult volunteers to help supervise children, if necessary.

#### **I Spy (younger children)**

This game has the children guessing what one child "spies" with his or her "little eye." Clues are given until someone in the group makes the correct guess. In the Emmaus story, there were several clues that the stranger was Jesus. Of course, Luke comes right out and tells us. But for the two travelers, the clues had to do with the stranger interpreting Scripture, with the travelers feeling that their "hearts were burning" within them, and with the stranger breaking bread with them.

Invite the children to play I Spy. In this game, one person sees an object and tries to get the rest of the group to guess what it is. The "spy" says, "I spy, with my little eye, something that begins with the letter J." Or, the "spy" could say, "I spy, with my little eye, something that is red (or round, or smelly, or whatever descriptive terms will add to the fun)." When the item is guessed, the person who guesses correctly gets to be the spy.

#### **Walk the Neighborhood (all ages)**

Adapt this activity to your particular setting; for example, if your church is in a location where walking the neighborhood is not practical, consider walking around the church property and identifying neighbors in each direction.

After the children have heard and discussed the story, explain to them that the act of hospitality on the part of the two travelers made it possible for them to recognize Jesus. The two travelers had been talking with a stranger who helped them understand the Scriptures, and they invited him to stay with them. Ask the children how well they know all their neighbors—at their homes and surrounding the church. Tell them they are going to take a walk to discover who some of the people are who live and work near their church.

Approach each home, apartment building, store, or office, and talk about who lives/works there. Invite the children to wonder about the "strangers" who live so close by. Encourage the children to use some contextual clues to guess, such as a bicycle in a driveway, a camper parked in back, flowers blooming, windows broken, signs in windows or on property, or people outside engaging in activities. Before moving on to the next location, say a prayer for the people who live or work at that property.

#### **Walk on Church Property (all ages)**

Take a walking tour of the church building, looking and listening for people and things the children might not ordinarily see or hear and getting acquainted with the space and the people who inhabit those spaces. As with "Walking the Neighborhood," talk about ways to make the people who work in these spaces seem less like strangers and more like friends, and pray for them before moving on.

#### **Clean Up**

Have the children help clean up the area. Put away Bibles and any materials used during the session.



## Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13–35

Games and  
Puzzles Workshop



### **D**epart: 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?

### **P**ass-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.

### **E**valuate

Were the children able to find Luke 24:13–35 in their Bibles? Did the children become familiar with the story? Were you able to walk the neighborhood, or did location or weather hinder this activity? What adaptations might you be able to make?

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