



Our Eyes Were Opened

Goal: To recognize the gracious presence of Jesus.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Luke 24:13-35

On Easter evening, two of Jesus' followers encountered the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus. They were suffering the despair of dashed dreams and expectations when they met Jesus, unaware of who he was. They spoke to him of their hope that Jesus of Nazareth "was the one who would redeem Israel" (v. 21, CEB). Then they told the news: Jesus is alive!

Jesus interpreted to them, "the things written about himself in all the scriptures" (v. 27, CEB). But it was when they shared a meal and Jesus took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them that "their eyes were opened and they recognized him" (v. 31, CEB). The followers returned to tell the disciples.

Be prepared! We never know when our eyes will be opened and we will recognize Jesus present with us. Here it was through the breaking of the bread. Christ's grace can reach us today—in the Lord's Supper and in our common meals. We will recognize Jesus and gratefully praise the risen Christ!

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

The disciples didn't recognize the risen Christ walking with them until their eyes were opened as they broke bread together. Imagine the tables around which your children sit—at tables in schools, tables at home with family meals, tables shared with guests at church who are homeless, picnic tables at the park, and communion at church. All of these places offer children the opportunity to experience God's grace and love.

Jesus appears as an unrecognized stranger in the story. Most children today are more than aware of "stranger danger." Trying to recognize Jesus in the stranger might best be left for adults, especially when children could be placed in harm's way by approaching an unknown person. Err on the side of safety when helping children to recognize Jesus today; help the children recognize Jesus closer to home.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

It was not Jesus' life and ministry that gave birth to the Christian church, it was news of his resurrection. How will you interpret the astoundingly good news of the empty cross and empty tomb to the children?

You are a spiritual guide, mentor, and bearer of that which is holy and mysterious. Each time you open a Bible story with them, you invite God's presence into that space and you invite the children to recognize God's grace.

Like the disciples on the Emmaus road, you invite them to open their eyes to ways that God's grace is present in their lives. Pray for each child and the ways that God is being made known in his or her life.

*Open my eyes to the gracious presence
of Jesus in the world, O God. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 8, 26

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

white candle

white cloth

Responding

Celebrating

can biscuits, cutting
board, baking sheet,
access to oven, knife,
butter, confectioners'
sugar or cinnamon
sugar

Praying

Grace Notes (GN) 1,
copies of GN 2

Offering

air-dry clay, rolling
pins, heart-shaped
cookie cutter, small
plates, battery-operated
tealight candles

Extra

copies of GN 3

GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

Before the children arrive, post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule.” Cut out and glue the arrow marker on a clothespin. Use the schedule to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

“Celebrating God’s Grace” and “Offering God’s Grace” require more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG **M**

Greet the children with the words “Christ is risen!” Prompt them to say, “He is risen indeed.” Welcome them to the second Sunday of Easter.

Invite the children to prepare the space for Easter worship, telling the children that Easter is not just a day; it’s a season. Wonder what the group could add to the worship table to signify Easter.

Ask them to include a Bible and a white cloth, the color for Easter. Place a white candle, representing the light of Christ.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing.

Place a long strip of paper on the floor for a mural. Ask children to draw a picture of Jesus walking down the road as well as background for the picture such as trees, bushes, flowers, rocks, sky, and so forth. Place the mural near your story space.

T *For children who struggle with transitions, this may be a good time for an adult helper to come close to one or more children to model and encourage appropriate responses.*

Singing

L **D**

Sing “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today”—**SCM 26**. Each time the children hear, “Alleluia,” have them stand, wave their hands in the air, and then sit back down.

Praying

Turn on the candle on the worship table. Remind the group that candles were extinguished when we read about Jesus’ death. This candle is lit to remind us that Jesus lives and is with us always. Pray:

Thank you for this day, O God. Thank you for Jesus, for his life, for his love, and for his resurrection. And thank you for . . . (say group members’ names). Open our eyes so we can understand how you will speak to us today. Help us show the joy of your resurrection. Amen.



Today's story can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible* edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.



Preparing to Hear the Story

M B L D

Comment on the mural drawing of Jesus. Ask the children to talk about a walk they've taken. Ask them to tell you about the person, or people, they walked with and how that person made the walk more enjoyable. Ask them to name particular places where they like to walk and to tell why they like those places. Tell them that today's story is about two people who took a walk and had a special friend join them.

Ask a volunteer to retell what happened in last week's story. Or remind the group that women went to the tomb on the day we call Easter. Today's Bible story happened later on the same day.

Hearing the Story

Invite a child to find Luke 24 in the Bible and place the open Bible on the worship table. Read **SCM 8** or use the story audio. If reading, use your voice, expressions, feelings, and body to make the story more lively. Vary the tone, speed, and pitch of your voice to indicate changes in mood. Conclude by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt the children to say, "Thanks be to God."

Invite the children to draw a picture of themselves on the mural as you read the story again or listen to the story audio.

C Give children time to respond and to share; for some children, listening and speaking may take longer.

Reflecting on God's Grace

C

Comment that the story about the Emmaus road shows us that Jesus is always with us and ready to give us his joy and his peace.

Tell the children that at the end of the story, when the two disciples realized it was Jesus, they said something to each other. Read Luke 24:32 from the NRSV and CEB below.

They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" (NRSV)

They said to each other, "Weren't our hearts on fire when he spoke to us along the road and when he explained the scriptures for us?" (CEB)

Wonder what it meant that the disciples' hearts burned inside them or their hearts were on fire when they recognized Jesus. If not mentioned, suggest that it means they were excited and happy about what Jesus told them. They ran right back to Jerusalem to tell others the good news that Jesus was alive. Ask:

- ▼ What do you do in your life that tells other people about Jesus?
- ▼ How does your heart feel when you do those things?



Ask children if they can name other things people do to remember Jesus is with us all the time. (*Wear cross jewelry, have pictures of Jesus and other religious art, pray at regular times, read the Bible, and so forth.*)

Singing

Listen to “We Are Dancing in the Love of God (Danzaremos en amor de Dios).” Encourage the children to dance joyously, to celebrate that Jesus is risen.

Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.



Celebrating God’s Grace



Explain that when Jesus gave bread to the disciples, he asked them to remember him after he died. Talk about ways we remember Jesus; one way is by eating bread together. Suggest that the celebration of the Lord’s Supper is one of the things we do to remind us about Jesus and his love for us.

Comment that one of the names for the meal is *Eucharist* (YOO-kuh-rist), which means “thanksgiving” or “gratitude.” Wonder what we thank God for when we eat bread in church.

Invite the children to celebrate God’s grace in Jesus by making bread. Separate the biscuits and place them on a baking sheet. Follow the instructions on the can for baking time. After baking, spread butter on each biscuit while they are warm. Sprinkle the biscuits with a bit of confectioners’ sugar or cinnamon sugar.

Discuss:

- ▼ I wonder, “Why do you think Jesus ate bread with his disciples?”
- ▼ When have you served bread to your friends?
- ▼ What do you think about when you eat bread at church?

Eat the bread together and rejoice in Christ’s resurrection.

FA *Many children have food and other allergies such as peanut, milk, egg, wheat, latex, grass, mold, and others. Be aware of all allergy issues the children may have. Avoidance is the best practice.*

If you cannot make the bread with the children, make it ahead of time and let them add the topping.



Praying God's Grace

B MS

Remind the children that as Jesus' disciples walked to Emmaus, at first they were sad and confused, and then they had a conversation about current events and heard about Scripture. After they recognized Jesus in the breaking of bread, they ran back to share the good news with others. Tell the children that they are going to take an Emmaus Prayer Walk that follows these actions of the disciples.

Invite the children to walk around the room in a path of their own choosing, but not interfering with other children. If you have a large space or outdoors area available, use that. Tell the children you will prompt them with ideas for prayer as they walk. Use the prompts on GN 1 to guide them in their prayer walk.

After the prayer walk, gather the children in a circle and ask them what they thought of the Emmaus Prayer Walk. Tell them that they can use this model to walk in prayer anytime, when they are walking down the sidewalk, around their room at home, or through the halls at school. Hand out Prayer Walk cards cut from copies of GN 2 to remind the children of the prayer pattern they can follow using 5 Rs. Encourage the children to take the cards home so they can use this prayer pattern during the week. Review the prayer pattern together:

1. **Recall** a sad time.
2. **Recount** a current event with God. (Tell God what's happening in the world today.)
3. **Remember** a Bible story and think about God's message to you.
4. **Recognize** Jesus' presence with you and thank God.
5. **Rejoice** in the good news.



Offering God's Grace

LG

Recall that the Bible says that the disciples' hearts burned within them. Give each child a ball of clay and a small plate. Use the following directions to make a tealight base to remind them of the disciples' hearts, and perhaps their hearts too as they think of Jesus.

- ▼ Roll the clay into a ball and press it out flat, about ½" thick.
- ▼ Form the clay into a heart shape or use a heart-shaped cookie cutter to cut a heart from the clay.
- ▼ Put the clay heart on the plate and press a tealight candle into the center of the heart. Wiggle the candle so that it can be removed and placed back when it is turned on and off.
- ▼ Let the clay harden.

Encourage children to take the candles home and light them during times when their family may pray together, such as meals or bedtime. Suggest that the candle may remind them that Jesus is with them.



GN 3 Solution:

C, F, E, D, A, B

Extra Activity

Remind the children that the two disciples were surprised that the traveler didn't know the events that took place in Jerusalem, so they told him. Then the traveler (Jesus) told them all about himself. Suggest that sometimes people need help knowing the story, and knowing it in the right order.

Hand out copies of **GN 3**. Have the children put today's story in the right order. They can either cut the scenes apart to reorder or simply note the letters in order.

Encourage the children to use the scenes as prompts for a short play. Let them create their own dialog based on the story they heard. Allow time for the children to practice the play and then act it out. If appropriate, ask if the children can present their play during worship.

LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Invite the children to gather and lead them in cleaning up the worship space.

Invite the children to think about how they will show others the good news that Jesus is with us. Encourage those who wish to share their ideas.

After each response, prompt the group to respond, "Thank you, *(Name)*, for sharing the good news with others."

Pray the following prayer or one of your own choosing.

Loving God, we thank you for the gift of Jesus and the bread we eat. May we share the good news of Jesus with others.
Amen.

Send each child with a blessing, saying, "*(Name)*, Jesus is with you always."



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads, where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).

Emmaus Prayer Walk

As the disciples walked to Emmaus, they were sad and confused. Tell God about a time you were sad this week or share a question with God that you wrestle with.

The disciples met a person on the road and told him about what had happened. Are there things happening in the world, in your community, or in your family that you want to talk about with God? Talk with God.

The person shared Scripture with the disciples. What Bible story can you think of right now? What do you think God is telling you in that story? Thank God for the message.

The disciples shared a meal with the person and recognized him as Jesus. When or where do you see Jesus? Thank God for Jesus' presence with you.

The disciples ran to tell the others about Jesus. Jump! Run (carefully)! Skip or dance! Thank God for joy and good news and anything else you want to thank God for!

Prayer Walk

1. **Recall** a sad time.
2. **Recount** a current event with God. (Tell God what's happening in the world today.)
3. **Remember** a Bible story and think about God's message to you.
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C



F



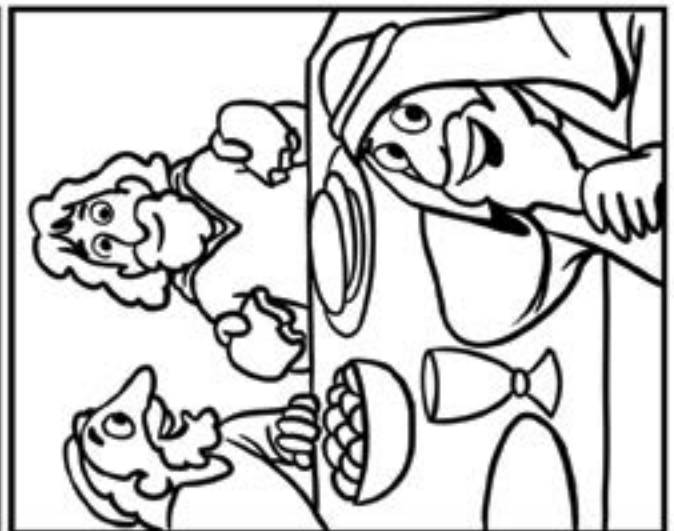
B



E



A



D

