

Lenten Resources – Road to Emmaus

Note to adults: Children absorb information everywhere. Their rapt attention when we are teaching is a beautiful thing, but they are also learning as we go about our day. Within these lessons are suggested conversation starters for your days as well as the core lesson. Use those hidden moments in the car, doing chores and eating meals together as learning opportunities also.

Week one Luke 24:13-16

Theme: Walking with the purpose of going home, not attentive to where God might show up

Opening: Gather as a family or group and spend a few minutes sharing about a time this week when you were distracted or preoccupied. What was your mind focused on? How did you feel? What do you think you could have missed around you as you were distracted?

Read: invite a reader in the group to read Luke 24:13-16 aloud. Repeat with two additional readers so the scripture is read three times.

Questions for discussion:

What were the disciples talking about that had happened?

What do you think they were feeling?

Why do you think they did not recognize Jesus?

Note to Adults: Allow the discussion to develop and answer questions as they are asked. If possible, remind participants about their comments from the opening regarding being distracted.

Activity: Take a walk

Supplies needed- TP Rolls to be made into “binoculars”. This can be one set per child, or a set to share for the family. Depending on the amount of time allotted for this activity, the TP rolls can be decorated, a neck string can be added, they can be hot glued together, or just held in hands.

Purpose- As a group or a family, take a simple walk. Inside or outside is fine. Try to go somewhere you are not familiar with. Have the participants take their walk with their binoculars up to their eyes, so they can only see what is directly in front of them. Make sure there are adults participating to keep everyone safe. As you walk ask the participants to tell what they see. Once you have walked a bit have the participants remove their binoculars and return the way you came. Have some good conversations about what participants could not see the first time.

What did they miss the first time?

Why did they miss seeing it?

Did they like seeing more of the world when the binoculars came off?

Wrap-up: This week our bible verses remind us that we need to open our hearts and our eyes to see God where we might not expect him. The disciples walking to Emmaus were joined by Jesus and were so upset that they didn't even recognize him. This week let's take special care to see God where he comes to us. We close with a special prayer today. Take this prayer home and use it all week at dinner or bed time.

God our Father, open our hearts to your presence. Be with us today as we strive to see You in all things. Amen

Additional focus ideas

Find a central place in the home to note where you saw God today (page on the fridge, sharpie on a window, post-it notes on the dining room wall) Make a practice of sharing with the family every day at a meal time or a gathering time.

Keep your binoculars close by this week as a reminder of how easily we can get distracted and not see everything around us. Hang them from a rear-view mirror or on the front door knob so as you travel through the day you keep them in mind.

Have the readers in your family read the verses aloud each day. Circle words that jump out at you, mention them to the family, and discuss why. Watch what words jump out as the week goes on.

Week two Luke 24:17-19

Theme: BIG Questions that start BIG conversations

Opening: Gather the group or family together and brainstorm some BIG questions. Start with this: What was the most important question you ever asked? Then move on to: What was the most important question anyone ever asked you? Encourage everyone to describe what happened after those questions were asked. What changed, what was shared, what was learned?

Read: invite a reader in the group to read Luke 24:17-19 aloud. Repeat with two additional readers so the scripture is read three times.

Questions for discussion: In last week's reading we saw Jesus join the Disciples, but they were so worried that they did not even recognize him. This week we continue our story with the Disciples and Jesus asking each other questions. These questions are important, but we know that the answers will be even more important. We need to be bold enough to ask the BIG questions, and good listeners to join the BIG conversation.

What did you hear in this reading?

What do you think the disciples are feeling?

What to you think will happen next?

Note to Adults: Allow the discussion to develop and answer questions as they are asked. If possible, remind participants about their comments from the opening regarding BIG questions in their own lives.

Activity: BIG conversation and BIG listeners

Supplies- one bag of M&M's (fun size is fine for a family)

Share again that opening our hearts to seeing God everywhere was the theme last week, and how important it is to be good listeners in order to hear God in BIG conversations. Use the M&M's as a conversation starter game. Have everyone draw an M&M in turn and follow the directions according to the color. (If the group is large or chatty, limit responses to 10 seconds)

RED- Tell us something about yesterday

ORANGE- Tell us something you do well

YELLOW- Tell us something about your childhood

BLUE- Tell us something you learned last week

BROWN- Tell us something you can't live without

GREEN- Tell us something you watch/listen to/read

Remind everyone at the beginning how important it is to be good listeners, and at the end try a pop quiz to see who listened carefully to their friends/family

Wrap-up: Big questions begin big conversations and we need to be ready to listen and participate in BIG conversations. This week let's remember that listening is as important as talking in a BIG conversation, and if we listen carefully, we can hear God everywhere.

God of wisdom and understanding, be with us this week as we become better listeners. Guide our conversations as we focus on you and your love for us, AMEN

Additional focus ideas

Have the readers in your family read the verses aloud each day. Circle words that jump out at you, mention them to the family, and discuss why. Watch what words jump out as the week goes on.

Check out www.TheFamilyDinnerProject.org as a resource for regular family dinners and good conversation starters. When we practice good listening, we open our eyes to see others, our hearts to love others and our minds to new possibilities

Parents find the one place you end up as a family every day and post a question there to start a conversation. Conversation starters abound on internet searches, pick your favorite 7 and start some great conversations this week with your family.

Week three Luke 24:20-21

Theme: How “hopes and dreams” can get in the way of perceiving what God is doing

Opening: Gather as a group or family and as everyone to share a hope or dream for their future. Make sure everyone has a chance to share and practice good listening as it happens.

Read: invite a reader in the group to read Luke 24:20-21 aloud. Repeat with two additional readers so the scripture is read three times.

Questions for discussion: What hopes, or dreams did you hear the Disciples sharing? How was what happened different from their hopes and dreams? Has something like that ever happened to you?

Note to Adults: Allow the discussion to develop and answer questions as they are asked. If possible, remind participants about their comments from the opening regarding hopes or dreams in their own lives.

Activity: Weekly calendar project

Supplies- one piece of paper for each family member or participant and pencils

Begin with the day you are in and write the next seven days on the top of the long side of the paper. Take a few minutes to write down things you expect to happen over the next week. Think about social plans, activities, tests, work meetings, menu planning, anything you think will happen and write it down on the day you expect it to happen. If you have very young participants, help them draw pictures of things. Once your calendars have expectations, you are ready to take them home. The homework for the week is to note every day if what you expected happened or not. When it does not happen, note something good that happened instead of the expected thing.

Wrap-up: The Disciples expected Jesus to be with them and keep teaching and healing. When he died, they were so shocked that they could not see that God was doing amazing things through Him. This week we will focus on seeing God in the unexpected and opening our minds to Him in everything. We will let go of our expectations and see God in the unexpected.

Father God, all knowing and all seeing, lead us this week into the unexpected, awesome ways you work in our lives. Bring us closer to you as we see you in all things. AMEN

Additional focus ideas

Commit to visiting your expectations calendars daily as a family. What was unexpected in your lives? Where did God make his presence known to you?

Have the readers in your family read the verses aloud each day. Circle words that jump out at you, mention them to the family, and discuss why. Watch what words jump out as the week goes on.

Week four Luke 24:22-24

Theme: Listening to the community and hearing hope

Opening: Pre- pop some popcorn and have some kernels available as well.

Gather as a group or family and examine the popcorn kernels. Do some wondering about how humans figured out how hard dry kernels could become such a yummy snack. If you are able show the portion of “The Kroods” where the large ear of corn is popped. Adults, begin to suggest that the kernel of corn looks kind of hopeless, and yet with the heat of fire it becomes something much more.

Read: invite a reader in the group to read Luke 24:22-24 aloud. Repeat with two additional readers so the scripture is read three times.

Questions for discussion: How did the disciples feel at the beginning of the reading? What changed as the women shared their news? Did the Disciples practice good listening? How did you think they felt when they went to the tomb and found it empty?

Note to Adults: Allow the discussion to develop and answer questions as they are asked. If possible, remind participants about their comments from the opening regarding how hope grows from hopelessness

Activity: Popcorn Games- having fun with popcorn as a reminder of the hope that comes from the news the women deliver the disciples

Popcorn Race: Using a drinking straw, participants must blow a popped kernel of popcorn across a table. First to blow it from one end to the other wins. Give each other hope by cheering on and encouraging.

Popcorn Catcher: stand on a chair and drop popped kernels of popcorn into a cup. The person with the most kernels in the cup when time is up wins.

Popcorn Toss: Each participant tries to throw a piece of popcorn as far as possible. The farthest throw wins.

Wrap-up: Did the games help you feel hopeful? Coming together as a community or a family gives us strength. When we feel sad or hopeless, listening to each other and being together helps give us hope. Just like the Disciples hearing that Jesus tomb was empty, hope comes from hard things. Remember the popcorn kernel, small and hard and not tasty, all it needs is some warmth and it becomes flavorful and filling.

Oh God, stay with me this week as I am filled with hope for the future. Lord of Love, help me listen to my community and see the hope there. Amen

Additional focus ideas

Have the readers in your family read the verses aloud each day. Circle words that jump out at you, mention them to the family, and discuss why. Watch what words jump out as the week goes on.

Send popcorn as a snack in family lunches this week

Use TP roll, smear with peanut butter and push popcorn and kernels into the peanut butter. Set outside for a bird feeder to give hope to the birds as spring arrives.

Week Five Luke 24:29

Theme: Stay with us, Prayer

Opening: Stay with me! Can anyone share about a time that they said those words? Were you scared? Did you really want a friend to stay to play? Were you excited about something?

Adults: Allow this conversation to grow and finish, encouraging the children to share by sharing your own stories.

Read: invite a reader in the group to read Luke 24:29 aloud. Repeat with two additional readers so the scripture is read three times.

Questions for discussion: As we draw close to the end of the Lenten season and The Passion of our Lord, the words “Stay with us” can take on a dual meaning.

Can anyone share what they think the Disciples must have felt when they invited their fellow traveler to stay with them?

Did they know the traveler was Jesus?

How was their question like a prayer?

Note to Adults: Allow the discussion to develop and answer questions as they are asked. If possible, remind participants about their comments from the opening about “Stay with me”. Make sure to encourage conversation about the prayer question

Activity: Creating a prayer Journal

These can be as simple as several pages of paper stapled together and folded in half, or get creative and use hole punches and cardboard to make a cover, tied together with twine or yarn. Spend time decorating the prayer journal as each participant would like, using images from the readings we have used, and from the Lenten season in general. Finally, start the prayer journal’s first few pages with the words “stay with us...” written at the top, inviting the journal user to complete the sentence. Use the prayer journals all week to focus on prayer.

Wrap-up: Complete your time together with a reminder of how the disciples felt when the traveler was invited to stay. Encourage journal usage to share feelings through prayer. Close with the following prayer

Lord God, Stay with us! Stay with us in the dark moments that end our days, and in the joyous times that fill us with hope. Stay with us when we are scared or angry about things we cannot control, and when we are happy and excited about the wonders of your world. AMEN

Additional focus ideas

Have the readers in your family read the verses aloud each day. Circle words that jump out at you, mention them to the family, and discuss why. Watch what words jump out as the week goes on.

Use the prayer journals as a family, adding artwork and song as you are creatively able together

Bless and pray with each child as they are sent to school during the day as a reminder that God will stay with them as they travel through their day.

Week Six- Holy Week Luke 24:31-33

Theme: Breaking bread together, eyes opened

Opening: Have some Hawaiian rolls or Challah Bread to share with the group as you are starting the discussion. Break off pieces and share as you talk.

Bread is an amazing food! Ask participants to share about their favorite bread. Has anyone ever made bread? See how we are sharing a snack together, talking and learning? What does that remind you of? (hopefully communion, last supper, etc)

Read: invite a reader in the group to read Luke 24:31-33 aloud. Repeat with two additional readers so the scripture is read three times.

Questions for discussion: Can anyone tell us the whole story of the Walk to Emmaus in their own words? Or, let's retell the story together, going one piece at a time around the group (family). What do you feel about the ending of the story? How do you think the disciples must have felt?

Note to Adults: Allow the discussion to develop and answer questions as they are asked.

Activity: Bread Painting- Seeing Jesus in the Breaking of the bread

Supplies: Loaf of white bread, food color or watercolor paints and paint brushes.

Now that the entire Road to Emmaus text has been explored, use the bread as canvases to paint symbols or images from the text. Depending to time allowed and participant numbers, give everyone one or more pieces of bread and invite them to paint an image or scene from the text. Participants can take parts so the whole loaf tells the story, or each person can work individually. As work is done share about what symbols each participant chose, why and what is important about it to them.

Wrap-up: Complete your time together with a reminder of how it feels to break bread together with others, and how the disciples must have felt seeing Jesus revealed to them.

Father God, this week we celebrate your Son, Jesus Christ, revealed to us in the breaking of bread. We thank you for the gift of his life giving death and resurrection. AMEN

Additional focus ideas

Have the readers in your family read the verses aloud each day. Circle words that jump out at you, mention them to the family, and discuss why. Watch what words jump out as the week goes on.

Bake bread together, or use store bought pizza dough to make pretzel shapes together

Discus with the family where you see Jesus in places you did not expect him, like the disciples having him revealed to him in the breaking of the bread.

PARENTS: This week is a very teachable week for our children. The richness of the Passion Story is not lost on our youngest participants. Some additional ideas follow to celebrate Holy week as a family

Search “resurrection rolls” online and make these amazing storytelling goodies together as a family. They are easy to make, and the final product is a teachable treat that represents the empty tomb.

Create a Road to Emmaus mini garden together. A baking sheet with potting soil and grass seeds, watered and given sun, quickly sprouts into a teaching tool. Make sure to leave a path without grass down the middle so when the grass grows it shows the road to Emmaus. You can also create and add salt dough figurines of the travelers as an additional activity.

Take time to revisit the hopefulness and promises in the Road to Emmaus story. Children will have questions about the Passion story as they experience it this week. Remind them about the Emmaus story and that it is the next chapter in the story of our faith.

