

Sunday Connection



Third Sunday of Easter, Cycle A

Sunday, April 26, 2020

Readings & Background

This Sunday's Readings

First Reading

Acts 2:14,22-33

Peter and the apostles announce that Jesus has been raised from the dead.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 16:1-2,5,7-11

God will show us the path of life.

Second Reading

1 Peter 1:17-21

You were saved by Christ's sacrifice.

Gospel Reading

Luke 24:13-35

Jesus appears to two disciples who are walking to Emmaus.

Background on the Gospel Reading

On most Sundays during the Easter season in Cycle A, our Gospel is taken from the Gospel of John. This week's Gospel, however, is taken from the Gospel of Luke. As in last week's Gospel, today's Gospel shows us how the first community of disciples came to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. In these stories we gain insight into how the community of the Church came to be formed.

When we read today's Gospel, we may be surprised to learn that these friends of Jesus could walk and converse with him at some length yet not recognize him. Again we discover that the risen Jesus is not always easily recognized. Cleopas and the other disciple walk with a person whom they believe to be a stranger; only later do

they discover that the stranger is Jesus. We learn that the first community met and recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread, just as we meet Jesus in the Eucharist.

We can imagine the feelings of the two disciples in today's reading. They are leaving their community in Jerusalem. Their friend Jesus has been crucified. Their hope is gone. They are trying to make sense of what has occurred, so that they can put the experience behind them.

Jesus himself approaches the two men, but they take him for a stranger. Jesus asks them what they are discussing. He invites them to share their experience and interpretation of the events surrounding his crucifixion and death. When the two disciples have done so, Jesus offers his own interpretation of his crucifixion and resurrection, citing Jewish Scripture. In that encounter we find the model for our Liturgy of the Word—what we do each time we gather as a community for the Eucharist. We reflect upon our life experiences and interpret them in light of Scripture. We gather together to break open the Word of God.

In the next part of the story, we find a model for our Liturgy of the Eucharist. The disciples invite the stranger (Jesus) to stay with them. During the meal in which they share in the breaking of the bread, the disciples' eyes are opened; they recognize the stranger as Jesus. In the Eucharist too we share in the breaking of the bread and discover Jesus in our midst. Just as the disciples returned to Jerusalem to recount their experience to the other disciples, we too are sent from our Eucharistic gathering. Our experience of Jesus in the Eucharist compels us to share the story with others.

Grades 1-3

Gospel Reading

Luke 24:13-35

Jesus appears to two disciples who are walking to Emmaus.

Making the Connection (Grades 1, 2, and 3)

Christ appears in children's lives in various forms. Like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, however, young children may not yet recognize Jesus' presence in their lives. We can help children to recognize Jesus in the Scriptures, the Eucharist, and the people around them, and we can invite them into a deeper relationship with Jesus.

Materials Needed

- Large Bag
- Several different sports balls (tennis balls, baseballs, ping-pong balls, footballs and so on)

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Play this guessing game with the children: Place a number of sports balls in a large bag. Ask for volunteers to reach into the bag and to choose a ball without removing it. Invite each volunteer to silently act out the sport that uses the ball or to describe the ball to the rest of the children by telling how the ball is used without naming the ball or the sport. After each ball has been identified, have the volunteer take it out and show it to the children.
2. When the bag is empty, say: *It's easier for us to identify something if we can see it in action or hear about what it does, isn't it? Was it easier to identify the ball by seeing the sport acted out or by hearing about the sport?* (Accept either answer.)

3. Say: *In this week's Gospel, we hear how two of Jesus' disciples met Jesus as they walked from Jerusalem to the town of Emmaus. Jesus told them that many stories in the Bible were about what had happened to him, but the disciples couldn't recognize Jesus until they saw him in action.* Retell the Gospel, Luke 24:13-35, in your own words or read the Gospel to them.
4. Ask: *When did the disciples discover that it was Jesus who had been walking with them? (when they were eating, as Jesus broke bread with them) Does the story of the meal that Jesus had with these two disciples remind you of another story about Jesus? Which one? (Jesus also broke bread with his disciples at the Last Supper.)*
5. Ask: *What action does Jesus do in both of those stories? (He breaks bread.) Say: At Mass we can recognize that Jesus is present in the same way during the breaking of the bread. The more we know about Jesus, the easier it will be to recognize him and follow him. What are some ways in which we can come to know Jesus? (through the Bible, as we gather for Mass, from other people—our family, catechists, priests, and teachers)*
6. Pray together that we will continue to learn about Jesus so that we can recognize and follow him. Pray together the Lord's Prayer or today's psalm, Psalm 16.

Grades 4-6

Gospel Reading

Luke 24:13-35

Jesus appears to two disciples who are walking to Emmaus.

Making the Connection (Grades 4, 5, and 6)

In the story of the disciples' encounter with Jesus on their journey to Emmaus, we have an opportunity to deepen children's experience of the Mass. Like the disciples in today's Gospel, we encounter Jesus in the breaking of the bread and as we read and reflect on Scripture. Just as the disciples returned to Jerusalem to share the good news of Jesus' Resurrection with others, so too we are sent forth from our Eucharistic celebration to share the Gospel with others.

Materials Needed

- Bible
- Small plate
- Wine glass

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Place the Bible, small plate, and wine glass where all of the children can see them. Ask: *When we gather to celebrate Mass, what special meal do we recall? (Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples) What special things did Jesus do at that meal? (He prayed a prayer of blessing, broke the bread, and gave the bread to his disciples.)*
2. Say: *That meal was the most important meal that Jesus shared with his disciples, but Jesus ate other meals with his friends too. The Gospels tell us that he multiplied bread and fish to feed a large crowd. After his Resurrection, the Gospels tell us that Jesus appeared to his disciples and shared meals with them. Today's Gospel is about one of these meals. Let's read the Gospel together.*
3. Invite one or more volunteers to read aloud today's Gospel, Luke 24:13-35.

4. Ask: *What are the two disciples doing when Jesus approaches them?* (They are leaving Jerusalem. They are talking about Jesus' crucifixion and death.) *Why do you think these disciples are leaving Jerusalem? What are their thoughts and feelings?* (Accept all reasonable answers.) *Do the disciples recognize Jesus as he approaches them?* (No) *What do the two disciples talk about with Jesus as they walk?* (Accept all reasonable answers.) *How does Jesus respond to them?* (Jesus asks the disciples to tell him about what had happened in Jerusalem, and then he interprets those events for them using Scripture.) *What happens during the meal?* (Jesus stays with them. Jesus blesses the bread, breaks it, and shares it with the disciples. The disciples recognize that the stranger is Jesus.) *What do the disciples do after the meal?* (They return to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples what has happened.)
5. Say: *In some important ways, that story reminds us of what we do when we gather for Mass. We read and reflect upon Scripture and try to interpret the events of our lives in the light of Scripture. That part of the Mass is called the Liturgy of the Word. Then we share a meal, doing what Jesus did: blessing and breaking the bread. That part of the Mass is called the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Whenever we celebrate Mass we recognize that Jesus is present to us in the Word and in a special way in the Eucharist. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, at the end of the Eucharist we are sent to share the good news of Jesus with others. We "go and announce the Gospel of the Lord."*
6. Invite the group to identify ways in which we share the good news of Jesus with others. (in our care for our friends and family, in sharing our possessions with those in need, in our prayer for those in need, and so on)
7. Conclude by praying together that we will recognize that Jesus is present to us in Scripture and the Eucharist. Pray that we will be faithful to Jesus by sharing our experience of Jesus with others. Pray together the Lord's Prayer or today's psalm, Psalm 16.

Grades 7-8

Gospel Reading

Luke 24:13-35

Jesus appears to two disciples who are walking to Emmaus.

Making the Connection (Grades 7 and 8)

On the road to Emmaus, the disciples invite the stranger (Jesus) to stay with them. During the meal, in which they share in the breaking of the bread, the disciples' eyes are opened; they recognize the stranger as Jesus. Encourage the young people to recognize that, in the Eucharist, we share in the breaking of the bread and discover Jesus in our midst.

Materials Needed

- A picture of a celebrity from a magazine

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Invite a volunteer who wears glasses for nearsightedness to come forward and remove his or her glasses.
2. Hold a picture of a celebrity as far away as possible from the volunteer and ask him or her if he or she recognizes the celebrity.
3. Invite the volunteer to move closer and closer until he or she can recognize the celebrity.
4. Tell the young people that sometimes we need help to see all that's going on around us.
5. Say: *In this Sunday's Gospel, we learn about two disciples of Jesus who had trouble recognizing him.*

6. Invite one or more volunteers to read aloud today's Gospel, Luke 24:13-35.
7. Ask: *What are the two disciples doing when Jesus approaches them?* (They are leaving Jerusalem. They are talking about Jesus' crucifixion and death.) *Why do you think these disciples are leaving Jerusalem? What are their thoughts and feelings?* (Accept all reasonable answers.) *Do the disciples recognize Jesus as he approaches them?* (No.) *What do the two disciples talk about with Jesus as they walk?* (Accept all reasonable answers.) *How does Jesus respond to them?* (Jesus asks the disciples to tell him about what had happened in Jerusalem. Then he interprets those events through Scripture.) *What happens during the meal?* (Jesus blesses the bread, breaks it, and shares it with the disciples. The disciples recognize that the stranger is Jesus.)
8. Say: *Whenever we celebrate Mass, we recognize that Jesus is present to us in the Word and in a special way in the Eucharist.*
9. Conclude by praying together that we will recognize that Jesus is present to us in Scripture and the Eucharist. Pray that we will be faithful to Jesus by sharing our experience of Jesus with others. Pray together the Lord's Prayer or today's psalm, Psalm 16.

Family

Gospel Reading

Luke 24:13-35

Jesus appears to two disciples who are walking to Emmaus.

Family Connection

Families, as the domestic church, have the opportunity to make the family meal a time of prayerful encounter with one another and with Jesus. At a family meal we share our experiences of the day and connect them with the experiences of others in the family. We can also enjoy the meal as an opportunity to reflect upon our family life in light of Scripture. At their best our family meals can connect us to Jesus too.

Choose a family meal this week to share one another's experiences of the week in a special way. Perhaps invite family members to plan and prepare the meal together. Begin the meal by reading today's Gospel, Luke 24:13-35. As you eat, talk together about how the disciples discussed their experiences in Jerusalem and how they came to understand them differently when Jesus interpreted those events in the light of Scripture. Then invite each family member to share the things that are going on in his or her life. Consider what Jesus might say to each person if he were sitting at your dinner table. Conclude with a special prayer after your dinner. Pray a prayer of blessing for each family member, asking that Jesus continue to be present in each person's life, helping each one to be a better follower of Jesus. Conclude with a Sign of Peace.