RESCUED

God's Story. Your Invitation.

Session 5: Death Did Not Win

Luke 24:13-43 • about 55 minutes • Leader Guide for 6th Grade TRE

Part 1: Before You Begin

Read this before class. Tonight the students meet the risen Jesus the way two disciples did: without recognizing him at first. The passage also happens to describe the shape of the Mass, and the students will find that themselves if you let them.

Where we are in the story

Last week was the cross. Tonight the tomb is empty, and Jesus is alive. This is the session that turns the study from a sad story into good news. Next week the students learn how to come home when they have walked away.

Tonight's aim

Students discover that Jesus really rose from the dead, that he explained the things concerning himself in the Scriptures, and that his friends recognized him when he broke the bread. By the end of the hour every student should be able to say that Jesus is alive, and that he is still known in the Scriptures and the breaking of the bread.

The passage in plain terms

On Easter Sunday afternoon, two disciples are walking seven miles from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus, talking about everything that happened. Luke names one of them, Cleopas, and leaves the other unnamed. Jesus joins them on the road, but they do not recognize him (24:13-16). He asks what they are discussing, and they tell the whole story with sad faces: Jesus was a prophet, he was crucified, we had hoped he was the one, and now some women say the tomb is empty (24:17-24).

Jesus calls them slow of heart to believe, and then, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself (24:25-27). Luke does not list the passages; he tells us the subject. At Emmaus they invite him to stay. At the table he takes bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to them, and their eyes are opened; then he vanishes (24:28-31). They say, Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road? (24:32), go back to Jerusalem that same hour, and find the eleven and the others gathered, who tell them: The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon! (24:33-34). Then the two tell their own story (24:35). While they are still talking, Jesus himself stands among them, shows them his hands and feet, and eats a piece of fish to prove he is not a ghost (24:36-43).

Two details for the students. First, the disciples say we had hoped, past tense; they have given up. Second, the pattern of the evening is the pattern of every Mass: first Jesus opens the Scriptures, then he breaks the bread, and they recognize him in the breaking of the bread (24:35).

What the Church teaches

The Church teaches that the Resurrection of Jesus is a real event, witnessed by real people, and the foundation of the whole Christian faith (CCC 638-639). It is not a metaphor for his teaching living on. The same Jesus who was crucified is alive in a glorified body, no longer subject to death; the tomb was empty, and he ate with his friends (CCC 645-646). The Church rests her faith on the apostles' testimony, on the empty tomb, and on the appearances of the risen Lord, and she holds that this faith is not something the apostles made up or wished into being (CCC 639-644).

The Church also sees in the Emmaus story the structure of the Eucharist: the Liturgy of the Word, where Jesus opens the Scriptures, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, where he is known in the breaking of the bread (CCC 1347). When the students go to Mass this Sunday, they will be walking the road to Emmaus.

Follow Luke's precision: he names Cleopas and leaves the second disciple unnamed. Say two disciples, not two men. And do not hand the students a reconstructed list of the passages Jesus explained on the road; Luke gives the subject, the things concerning himself, not a list of passages.

Saints who said yes

St. Mary Magdalene

The first person to see the risen Jesus. She went to the tomb early on Easter morning, found it empty, and stood outside weeping. When Jesus spoke to her, she thought he was the gardener until he said her name (John 20:11-18). Then she went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord. The Church calls her the apostle to the apostles, because she carried the news first.

St. Paul

He hated Christians and hunted them until the risen Jesus stopped him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). Years later he listed the witnesses of the Resurrection, hundreds of them, and added himself last: he appeared also to me (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). He spent the rest of his life telling people that if Christ has not been raised, faith is useless, and that Christ has been raised.

Questions students may ask

- Why did they not recognize Jesus? Luke says their eyes were kept from recognizing him. Jesus wanted them to understand the Scriptures first, so that when they saw him, they would know what it meant. He does the same for us: Word first, then the breaking of the bread.
- How do we know Jesus really rose? The Church's faith rests on the people who saw him: the empty tomb, the appearances to many witnesses, and the apostles who staked their lives on what they had seen (CCC 639-644). They did not expect it, and it took them time to believe it themselves. We will not solve every question tonight; the point is that the first witnesses saw him, touched him, and ate with him.

- Was the second disciple a woman? Luke does not say. He names Cleopas and leaves the other unnamed. Some old traditions think it was his wife. We do not know, and we should not fill in what Luke left blank.
- What does the breaking of the bread have to do with Mass? Everything. At every Mass Jesus opens the Scriptures for us, then takes bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it. The Emmaus evening is the shape of the Mass, and the Church has known that from the beginning (CCC 1347).

Materials

Catholic Bibles with page numbers ready for Luke 24, Psalm 16, and Acts 2, pencils, name tents, reflection cards.

Timed plan

Welcome and opening prayer, 5 minutes. Opening situation, 4. Reading Luke 24:13-43 in segments, 8. Discovery questions, 18. Flashback to Psalm 16, 5. Personal question, 4. Catholic connection, 6. Prayer, one step, and closing, 5.

If you are running long: shorten the opening situation to one answer. Never cut question 4, the flashback, or the Catholic connection.

Part 2: Discussion Guide

OPENING PRAYER

Leader prays, everyone answers Amen. Jesus, you walked beside two friends who did not know it was you. Walk beside us tonight. Open the Scriptures to us, and open our eyes. Amen.

WHERE WE ARE IN THE STORY

Read aloud: *Last week we watched Jesus die. Tonight we find out what happened next, from two people who had already given up.*

OPENING SITUATION

Read aloud: *Imagine you get news so good you cannot believe it. Your team won, the test was cancelled, someone you thought was gone is coming back. What is your first reaction: joy, or suspicion that it cannot be true? Why is really good news sometimes hard to believe?*

> ***Leader:*** *Two or three answers. Then say: Tonight, two people get the best news in history, and they cannot see it even when it is walking beside them.*

READ LUKE 24:13-43

Read the passage in segments, in parts: a narrator, Jesus, the two disciples, and the gathered disciples. Read verses 13 to 24, then question 1. Read verses 25 to 35, then questions 2 to 5. Read verses 36 to 43, then question 6. Anyone may pass on reading aloud. Give the page number for Luke 24 before you start.

Leader: *Luke names only one disciple, Cleopas. Say two disciples, not two men; Luke leaves the second one unnamed.*

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

Read verses 13 to 24

1. In verses 15 and 16, who joins the two disciples on the road? Do they know it is him?

Answer • share after the discussion

Jesus himself joins them, but their eyes are kept from recognizing him. He is walking right beside them, and they think he is a stranger. And listen to how they tell him the story in verse 21: we had hoped, past tense. They think their hope died on Friday. They have already given up.

Read verses 25 to 35

2. In verses 25 to 27, what does Jesus do before he lets them recognize him?

Answer • share after the discussion

Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he shows them the things in the Scriptures that are about him. He teaches them from the Scriptures first. He wants them to understand who he is before they see who he is.

3. At the table in verses 30 and 31, what four things does Jesus do with the bread? Where have you heard those four words before?

Answer • share after the discussion

He takes it, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to them. Those are the four actions of the Last Supper, and they are what the priest does at every Mass. The moment he breaks the bread, their eyes are opened and they recognize him.

Leader: *If a student says Mass, celebrate it. If no one does, ask: where do you see a priest take, bless, break, and give bread?*

4. Verse 32: what do they say their hearts were doing while he talked on the road? And verse 35: how do they say he was known to them?

Answer • share after the discussion

Their hearts were burning while he opened the Scriptures, and he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. That is the shape of the whole evening: first the Word, then the Bread. It is also the shape of every Mass you have ever been to: first the readings, then the Eucharist.

5. What do they do as soon as they recognize him, in verses 33 to 35? What do they hear when they arrive?

Answer • share after the discussion

They get up that same hour and go back to Jerusalem to tell the others. When they arrive, the gathered disciples greet them with the news: The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon! Then the two tell their own story. Meeting the risen Jesus makes people go and tell someone, and they find the good news already spreading.

Read verses 36 to 43

6. In verses 36 to 43, the disciples think they are seeing a ghost. What does Jesus do to show them he is not one?

Answer • share after the discussion

He shows them his hands and feet, tells them to touch him, and eats a piece of broiled fish in front of them. Ghosts do not have flesh and bones, and they do not eat. Jesus really rose, in a real body, and Luke wants us to know it.

Leader: *Sixth graders love this one. Let it be a little funny; it is meant to be convincing.*

FLASHBACK: THE PSALM THAT SAW EASTER COMING

Read aloud: *On the road, Jesus explained the Scriptures about himself. Here is one he could have used. Seven weeks later, St. Peter used it at Pentecost. We flash back a thousand years: King David is singing a song of trust in God, even in the face of death.*

Read Psalm 16:9-11, then Acts 2:31, where Peter explains it (give both page numbers; two readers)

1. What does the psalm say God will not let happen to his holy one, and what will God show him instead?

Answer • share after the discussion

God will not abandon him to the grave or let his holy one see the Pit; instead he will show him the path of life. A thousand years before Easter, David sang about a body that would not rot in the tomb. At Pentecost, Peter told the crowd that David was speaking about Jesus: he was not abandoned to death, and his body did not decay (Acts 2:31). Jesus truly died and was buried, and on the third day he rose.

Leader: *This is what tonight's flashbacks are: the Old Testament waiting for Easter. Do not give the students a list of every passage Jesus explained; Luke does not.*

BACK TO THE PRESENT

Read aloud: *Back to the road to Emmaus. This is what Jesus meant by Moses and all the prophets. The whole Old Testament was waiting for this morning, and Jesus was the one explaining it.*

THE PERSONAL QUESTION

Read aloud: *The two disciples did not recognize Jesus even though he was right beside them. Where do you think Jesus might be walking beside you this week without you noticing? Write one place on your reflection card.*

Leader: *A full minute of silence. No sharing required.*

THE CATHOLIC CONNECTION

Share after the discussion

Here is what the Church says about tonight. Jesus really rose from the dead. It is not a way of saying his ideas lived on. The tomb was empty, he ate with his friends, and hundreds of people saw him. The Church calls the Resurrection the foundation of everything we believe (CCC 638-639).

And the Church has always seen something else in this story. The two disciples met the risen Jesus in two ways, in the Scriptures he opened on the road and in the bread he broke at the table. That is the shape of every Mass: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist (CCC 1347). When you go to Mass this Sunday, you are walking the road to Emmaus, and the same Jesus is at the end of it. The bread the priest breaks has become his Body, and he is really there.

Leader: *Keep the Mass connection concrete: readings, then Eucharist. Session 7 says plainly what the Eucharist is; tonight one sentence is enough.*

PRAYER

Leader: *Remind them, every time: you do not have to feel anything special. Feelings are not the measure of God's grace.*

Read aloud: *Let us pray. Talk to Jesus in your head while I say these words. Jesus, you are alive. You walked beside two friends who had given up, and you opened their eyes. Walk beside me this week, and open mine. Amen.*

ONE STEP THIS WEEK

Read aloud: *One thing this week. At Mass this Sunday, watch for the two halves of Emmaus: the readings, where Jesus opens the Scriptures, and the bread being taken, blessed, broken, and given. Tell someone in your family afterward where you saw them.*

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, risen from the dead, make our hearts burn when the Scriptures are opened, and open our eyes when the bread is broken. Amen.

MEMORY VERSE

“The Lord has risen indeed.” (Luke 24:34)

Part 3: Leader Reference Card

TONIGHT'S PASSAGE

Luke 24:13-43 (read aloud in segments); flashback Psalm 16:9-11 with Acts 2:31 read live

SUPPORTING REFERENCES

- John 20:11-18 (Mary Magdalene at the tomb)
- 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (St. Paul's list of witnesses)
- Luke 22:19 (the same four actions at the Last Supper)

CATECHISM

- CCC 638-639 (the Resurrection, a real event)
- CCC 639-644 (the witnesses; not invented)
- CCC 645-646 (the glorified body)
- CCC 1347 (the Emmaus meal and the two parts of the Mass)

SAINTS WHO SAID YES

- St. Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18)
- St. Paul (Acts 9; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

MATERIALS

Catholic Bibles with page numbers ready for Luke 24, Psalm 16, and Acts 2, pencils, name tents, reflection cards.

NOTE

Luke names Cleopas only; say two disciples, not two men.