

Session 11: Known in the Breaking of the Bread

Luke 24:13-35; Acts 2:42-47

Part One: Leader Preparation Guide

Session Overview

Discovery Aim. The group discovers that on the first Easter evening, the risen Jesus did with two disciples exactly what this study has done for ten weeks, opened the Scriptures about himself beginning with Moses, and that he chose to be recognized not in the explanation but in the breaking of the bread.

Catholic Touchstone. The Church has kept the name from that evening: the Breaking of Bread (CCC 1329), and the Mass to this day moves as Emmaus moved: the Scriptures opened on the road, the bread broken at the table (CCC 1346-1347).

What You Need to Know

A note of precision first, because this study keeps its habits to the end: Luke tells us two disciples walked to Emmaus, and he names only one, Cleopas. The second is left unnamed; a later, uncertain tradition, prompted by Mary of Clopas at the cross (John 19:25), has wondered whether the companion was Cleopas's wife. Say two disciples throughout, as the text does, and let the second walker stay as open as Luke left them, which has the happy effect of leaving room on that road for every reader.

Now the shape of the session. After the summit of Session 10, tonight is the descent into daylight: what does the finished Passover look like in the risen world? Luke's answer is a seven mile catechesis. The two disciples know all the facts and none of the meaning; their hope is past tense, we had hoped. The stranger does not begin with his identity; he begins with Moses and all the prophets, interpreting in all the scriptures the things concerning himself, which is, the group should be allowed to notice with a jolt, precisely the method of the last ten weeks. Then, at table, four verbs: he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. Luke has used a closely parallel chain twice before: at the feeding of the five thousand, and, with gave thanks where Emmaus says blessed, at the Last Supper. Their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight.

Handle the vanishing with the Fathers' delicacy rather than a syllogism: at the moment they know him in the bread, the appearance withdraws, and what remains with them is the burning, the road back to Jerusalem, and, as the Fathers loved to reflect, the bread in which he chose to be known. Luke then hands the Church one of her most ancient names for the Eucharist, twice: he was known to them in the breaking of the bread, and, in the second chapter of his second volume, the baptized devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Whether the meal at Emmaus was itself a Eucharist in the full sense, the Church has discussed with honest latitude; what Luke certainly teaches is where the risen Christ chooses to be known, and what his Church, from her first page, did about it.

Old Testament Roots and Fulfillment

Beginning with Moses. Luke 24:27 is this study's charter written into the Gospel: beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. The lamb, the covenant meal, the manna, the bread of the Face, Melchizedek's offering, the cups: the risen Lord's own curriculum ran through the texts this group now knows.

The burning heart. Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures? (Luke 24:32). Israel's Scriptures, rightly opened, do not merely inform; they kindle. The group has ten weeks of evidence.

Fulfillment. The two movements of Emmaus, Scripture opened and bread broken, became the two tables of the one Mass, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist (CCC 1346-1347). Every Sunday since

has been the Emmaus road walked again: the Church hears him in the Scriptures and knows him in the breaking of the bread.

Voices of the Church

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

In summary of his Easter preaching on this Gospel (see Sermon 235): Augustine pressed his hearers with the obvious question and its stunning answer. Where did the Lord will to be recognized? Not in the long exposition on the road, but in the breaking of the bread. And Augustine turned it on the congregation: this was written for us, who do not see him with our eyes; whoever believes, let him take comfort: the Lord is known in the breaking of the bread, and he has not withdrawn from us what he gave at that table.

St. John Paul II (1920-2005)

In summary of his apostolic letter *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, whose very title renders the disciples' plea of Luke 24:29 (the verse reads: Stay with us, for it is toward evening), the pope read Emmaus as the image of the whole Christian life. Wherever hope has died into we had hoped, the risen Christ draws near on the road, warms the heart through the Scriptures, and makes himself known in the breaking of the bread; and the Church's task in every age is to pray that plea and to live from that recognition.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897)

From *Story of a Soul*, in summary of a passage she wrote about Communion: it is not to remain in the golden ciborium that Christ comes down to us each day from heaven, but to find another heaven, the heaven of our soul, in which he takes his delight. The two disciples begged a stranger to stay; Thérèse knew how completely he had said yes.

Catechism Connection

- CCC 1329: the Eucharist is called the Breaking of Bread because Jesus used this rite when he blessed and distributed the bread as master of the table, above all at the Last Supper; it is by this action that his disciples will recognize him after his Resurrection.
- CCC 1346-1347: the liturgy of the Eucharist unfolds according to a fundamental structure preserved throughout the centuries: the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist form one single act of worship; and the Catechism itself asks: is this not the same movement as the Paschal meal of the risen Jesus with his disciples, who walking with them explained the Scriptures, then sat at table, took bread, blessed, broke, and gave?
- CCC 1391-1392: Communion with the Body and Blood of Christ preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace; what material food does for bodily life, Communion does for the spiritual.

THREAD WATCH

The command to eat. Quietly add the risen tense: the Lord who commanded eating from Egypt onward now chooses eating as the place of recognition. The whole chain assembles aloud next week; tonight, one sentence at most.

Where is the lamb? One week left. If the group is aching for it, smile: bring your list next week; we finish everything.

Study wrap prep. Next session is the finale: ask everyone to bring their running lists and their Take-Homes if they kept them. Review the Session 12 commissioning ritual this week.

Session Goals

1. Keep Luke's precision: two disciples, only Cleopas named.

2. Walk the Emmaus structure: dead hope, Scripture opened, bread broken, recognition, mission.
3. Discover the four-verb chain and its two Lukan precedents.
4. Trace the breaking of the bread from Emmaus into Acts as the Church's own name and practice.
5. Answer the ordinary-meal steelman with honest latitude.

A note on time. If you must cut, cut the second Win question and the Dig Deeper. Keep Acts 2:42; the session's argument completes there.

Part Two: Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer

Leader: Lord Jesus, you caught up with two grieving friends on the worst road of their lives and set their hearts on fire with the Scriptures. Catch up with us tonight. Open the word until it burns, and stay with us, for it is toward evening. Amen.

Win: Opening the Conversation

1. Tell us about a conversation on a walk or a drive that changed how you saw something. Why do moving conversations reach places sitting ones do not?
2. Have you ever failed to recognize someone you knew well because they were somewhere you never expected them? What finally gave them away?

Build: Into the Text

Leader: A note before reading: Luke says two disciples and names only Cleopas; the second is left unnamed (a later, uncertain tradition has wondered about Cleopas's wife, from Mary of Clopas in John 19:25). We will say two disciples, as Luke does.

3. Read Luke 24:13-24. Take the disciples' own summary of the weekend in verses 19-24. What facts do they have right? So what exactly is missing, according to their own words in verse 21?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

They have essentially everything: Jesus of Nazareth, prophet mighty in deed and word, condemned and crucified, the third day, the women's report, the empty tomb, the vision of angels. Their facts are the Creed's facts.

What is missing is in three words: we had hoped. Hope in the past tense. They possess the data of Easter and none of its meaning, walking away from Jerusalem with the resurrection already reported to them. Information, the group should notice, was never the disciples' problem, and it is rarely ours.

4. Read Luke 24:25-27. Where does the stranger begin, and what is his method in verse 27? Slow down and recognize it: what has he just done, and where have you seen it before?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

He begins not with his identity but with their Scriptures: was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Let the room feel the jolt: this is the method of the last ten weeks. Moses first: the lamb, the covenant meal, the manna, the bread of the Presence; the prophets and the psalms: the new covenant, the priest for ever, the cup of salvation. The risen Lord's own Easter catechesis ran the route this group has walked. The study did not invent its method; it borrowed his.

5. Read Luke 24:28-32. At the table, list the four verbs of verse 30 in order. Where has Luke used a closely matching chain before? Look up Luke 22:19 and Luke 9:16 and compare. And what happens at the moment of recognition?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

He took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. Luke 22:19, the Last Supper: took, gave thanks, broke, gave. Luke 9:16, the feeding of the five thousand: took, blessed, broke, gave. Three tables, one closely matching fourfold pattern (22:19 says gave thanks where 24:30 says blessed). Luke is writing the echo on purpose; the two disciples were not at the Last Supper, but Luke's readers, at their own weekly table, cannot miss it.

Their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. Handle the vanishing gently, as the Fathers did: at the moment they know him in the bread, the appearance withdraws, and what remains is the burning and the road; and the Fathers loved to add: and the bread, the place he chose to be known. Recognition does not end the presence; it redirects where they look for it. Hold the bread clause as the Fathers' reflection, not a detail Luke narrates.

6. Read Luke 24:33-35, then Acts 2:42-47, Luke's second volume, days after Pentecost. What phrase does Luke use in 24:35, and what has it become by Acts 2:42? What four things does the newborn Church devote itself to?

ANSWER (*share after the discussion*)

He was known to them in the breaking of the bread: Luke gives us the phrase at Emmaus. By Acts 2:42 it stands with a definite article among the four marks of the Jerusalem community's life, the text the Church has always read Eucharistically (CCC 1329); verse 46's daily breaking of bread in homes shows meal and rite living close together, and interpreters discuss where each verse sits. What is certain: the phrase from Easter evening names, within weeks of Pentecost, something the community devoted itself to.

The Church keeps the name (CCC 1329), and the shape: the Scriptures opened, then the bread broken, the two tables of every Mass (CCC 1346-1347). Emmaus was not a one-time consolation; it was the template.

The Other Side of the Table

Leader: Read the objection at full strength.

The ordinary-meal reading. The supper at Emmaus was hospitality, not a sacrament. The two disciples were not at the Last Supper and had no institution to recognize; there is no cup, no covenant word, no this is my body. They recognized Jesus because they had seen him bless and break bread before, perhaps at the feeding of the multitude, the way you know a friend by a familiar gesture. Building Eucharistic doctrine on a roadside dinner reads the Mass back into a text about recognition.

7. Strengthen it: what is the best additional case that this was recognition of a gesture, not a sacrament?

ANSWER (*share after the discussion*)

Good additions: Luke elsewhere shows the risen Jesus eating ordinary food to prove he is no ghost (Luke 24:41-43); the disciples' report emphasizes knowing him, not receiving anything; and sound method should not demand every bread text be the Eucharist, a caution this very study has used against others.

8. Now answer with the study's own honesty. What does our case actually rest on: this one meal, or something larger in Luke's two volumes? And what may be held with latitude?

ANSWER (*share after the discussion*)

Grant the latitude honestly: whether the Emmaus table was itself a Eucharist in the full sense, the text does not say, and faithful readers have weighed it differently; nothing tonight requires deciding it. The case rests on what Luke has done as an author across two volumes: he stamps the meal with the closely matching four-verb pattern of the Last Supper and the feeding; he introduces the phrase the breaking of the bread at this table; and he then uses that same phrase, definite article and all, for the newborn community's practice in Acts. An author who did all that by accident would be the luckiest writer in history.

And note what the gesture-recognition reading quietly concedes: that Jesus is known, on Easter evening, in the taking, blessing, breaking, and giving of bread. That concession is the session's whole claim. This ancient name for the Eucharist does not say he was proven or explained in the breaking of the bread; it says he was known there, and Luke wrote it for every disciple who would never see the road but would always have the table.

DIG DEEPER: We Had Hoped

Go back to Luke 24:21 and sit with the past tense: we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. They say this to the Redeemer, on the third day, with the tomb already empty.

Ask: what have you filed under we had hoped, a calling, a person, a version of your faith? The Emmaus pattern is that the risen Christ walks precisely into the past tense, and reopens it with Scripture and bread. What would you need to let him near enough to try?

Send: Taking It With You

9. The two disciples recognized him and immediately walked seven miles back in the dark to tell the others. Recognition became mission within the hour. When you receive him at Mass this week, who is your Jerusalem, and what is your seven miles?

10. Stay with us, for it is toward evening. What would it mean to pray that this week not as a quotation but as your actual request?

Live It This Week

- At Mass this Sunday, live the two tables deliberately: during the readings, ask him to make your heart burn; at the fraction, when the priest breaks the Host, pray: let me know you in the breaking of the bread.
- Take one walk this week with no phone, and narrate the road to Christ as the two disciples did, griefs and dead hopes included.
- Pray Stay with us, Lord each evening at dusk, and bring next week your running lists: every thread of this study resolves at the final session.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. Luke 24:35

Closing Prayer

Together: Stay with us, Lord, for it is toward evening and the day is far spent. Open the Scriptures until our hearts burn, break the bread until our eyes open, and send us back down the road with news too good to walk slowly. Amen.

Part Three: Leader Reference Card

Passage	Used For
Luke 24:13-24	Two disciples; the facts without the meaning; we had hoped
Luke 24:25-27	Beginning with Moses: the study's method in the Lord's mouth
Luke 24:28-32	Four verbs; recognition; the vanishing; live discovery
Luke 22:19; Luke 9:16	The verb chain's two Lukan precedents; live discovery
Luke 24:33-35	He was known in the breaking of the bread; mission
Acts 2:42-47	The breaking of bread as the Church's fixed practice; live discovery
Luke 24:41-43	Steelman support: risen Jesus eating ordinary food
Luke 24:21	Dig Deeper: we had hoped
Luke 24:35	Memory verse