

The Road to Emmaus

Grades
3-4

RECOGNIZE

LUKE 24:13-35

What's happening in this story?

We enter this story focused on two disciples who are confused and still mostly in disbelief about the news of Jesus' resurrection. Jesus meets these two disciples while they are on the road traveling, but they do not recognize him. As they gather at the table, and Jesus breaks, blesses, and gives bread, all is revealed. And just as all is revealed—and they are aware of whose presence they have been in that day—Jesus is gone.

What does this story mean for kids?

The beauty of "The Road to Emmaus" is that it happened in daily life while Jesus' followers were talking to friends, walking, eating a meal, and inviting a friend to stay over. Kids can similarly imagine where Jesus might enter our daily lives—at the grocery store? The library? The swimming pool? Does Jesus walk with us today on the soccer field or at the gym? You can enter the story by exploring where they might encounter Jesus in their life.

Why this theme?

It can sometimes be difficult to remember that—despite the chaos—God is still active and present in the world. The response is not to dismiss God's role, but to search it out. To look for and praise the moments when we recognize Jesus at work among us.

AGE LEVEL TIP

Third and fourth graders are just beginning to recognize some of their God-given talents and abilities. Name what you see in them: "You are such a great friend!" "You are so gentle with people who are sad." "Your smile helps everyone feel welcome."



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Clear tape
- Crayons
- Markers
- Pens
- Colored pencils

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Mural paper
- Small paper napkin
- Camera or smartphone

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

On a large sheet of mural paper, write:
“When have you been surprised?” “Who has surprised you?” “Name a favorite surprise.”
“Name anyone in the world you would like to surprise you with a visit.”
Invite kids to share their responses with each other.

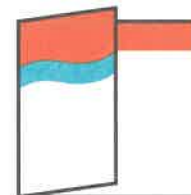
Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

Have you ever not recognized someone you know? Maybe they had a new haircut or had grown taller. Has someone who knows you ever not recognized you? What happened? Allow time for discussion. In today’s story, two of Jesus’ followers don’t recognize him until he performs some familiar actions. Like those followers, we can recognize Jesus’ presence in the actions of people sharing God’s love. Even when we don’t recognize him, Jesus is with us, working through people to bring God’s love to everyone.

Pray together: **Dear Jesus, thank you for walking with us when we recognize you and when we don’t. Inspire us to act in ways that help others know you are with us. Amen.**

Pass out leaflets and pens.

Sometimes even familiar things can be tricky to recognize. Take a look at your leaflet. These are some extreme close-ups. Can you see what six things are pictured? Encourage kids to work alone at first, then to share ideas with a partner. Bring the group back together to discuss answers (apple, pumpkin, baseball glove, fish, flamingo, truck tire). Besides an extreme close-up, what could make something hard to recognize? What helps you recognize something?



Gather kids around the screen where you’ll watch the video.

Have you ever seen anyone at this church wearing a costume? What was going on? Let’s watch as the Whirl kids try to understand a sermon given in disguise.

View Episode 8, “Jesus Incognito,” on the Year Blue Spring Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- What are the kids struggling to understand?
- When and why might you disguise yourself?
- Would you disguise yourself to learn what people think about you? Why or why not?
- Jesus didn’t intentionally disguise himself. Why do you think his followers didn’t recognize him?
- How do you feel Jesus is with you even though you don’t see him?



Open your Whirl Kids Study Bibles.

Today's passage is in the book of Luke. It's in the New Testament in the Gospels and Acts section of the Bible. If this is your first time reading from Luke, invite kids to check out the book introduction and comic on page 1225.



In today's story, we will read about three characters: Cleopas, Cleopas' friend who is not named, and Jesus. This story takes place after Jesus has risen, but that news isn't known yet by many people. Cleopas and his friend are talking about everything they've heard while walking along the road to Emmaus.

Help kids find Luke 24:13-35 and read it in this creative way together: Ask kids to find a space on the floor away from everyone else. **Close your eyes. If you want to read a verse or two, raise your hand. I'll tap your shoulder and give the Bible to you when it's time for you to read. When you read, disguise your voice. When you have finished reading, the rest of us will try to guess who you are.** Divide the reading into short chunks so each volunteer will read about the same number of verses. After everyone has had a chance to read, reread the story in its entirety so kids can really focus on it.

Invite kids to check out what Mimi says about Luke 24:13-16.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- **How long after Jesus' resurrection did this story happen?**
- **Why do you think the two followers invited Jesus into their home before they knew who he was?**
- **What did Jesus do that caused the followers to recognize him?**
- **If you had been one of the disciples on the road, do you think you would have recognized Jesus? Why or why not?**
- **Imagine that you want people to recognize Jesus in you. What would you do?**

Make your mark on the Wall Chart.

Look at the chart and find the theme for today. Give kids time to find the word *Recognize*. **Jesus vanished as soon as the two followers recognized him. Let's crumple a napkin and tape it to the Wall Chart near the box by *Recognize* to help us remember that it was in Jesus' blessing and breaking of bread that the followers recognized him.**



BIBLE BIT

Cleopas is named as a disciple in this story. Some traditions hold that this is the same person as Jesus' uncle Clopas who is mentioned in John 19:25.

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, discuss how the kids might recognize Jesus if he joined them in their everyday lives.

OUR CHURCH

Invite someone in your church who has experience with outreach to talk about what your church does to help your community recognize Jesus.

Open leaflets and pass out markers, colored pencils, and crayons.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. **Stand in a circle and close your eyes.**
2. Move kids to different places in the circle. Have them hold hands and guess whose hands they are holding. **Can you recognize someone you know without seeing them? Why or why not?** Invite kids to sit down.
3. **Jesus' disciples didn't recognize him, even though they could see him.** Invite kids to talk about the places where they see God's love in the world (in nature, with friends, with family, in a teacher's smile). **How do you recognize Jesus in other people and places?**
4. **Draw a picture or write some words inside the frame on your leaflet describing who you are with, what you are doing, or where you are during a moment when you recognize Jesus at work in the world.**
5. When kids have finished drawing, take individual photos of each kid holding up their leaflet. Tell kids how they can have access to the photos after class (text message, email, church's website, printed photos). If you don't have time to take individual photos, take a group photo instead.
6. **Jesus is with us, and Jesus works through us. We can't see his physical body, but we can recognize his presence in ourselves and in others. When you get home today, ask the people you live with how they recognize Jesus' work in the world.**

LAUNCH

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Jesus promises to be with us all the time. As you think about your everyday life, where do you see Jesus? How do you know? When might Jesus be with you but you don't recognize him?

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out pens.

How do you show love and care to others? Discuss ways people might recognize Jesus in the kids' lives. **Write your ideas inside the mirror. Post it where you can see it every day.**

Send kids out with a blessing.

Circle up with kids. **God blesses all of us. And that means me** (place a hand on your chest). **And that means you** (place your other hand on the shoulder of the kid next to you). Each kid passes the blessing by repeating those words and actions. When the blessing makes it back to you, say, **Go and bless the world.**

Thank kids for coming today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.