



Our Eyes Were Opened

(based on Luke 24:13-35)

Two friends of Jesus were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus (eh-MAY-uhs), a small town about ten miles away. As they walked together, they remembered all the things that had happened in Jerusalem. They had been in the crowd shouting, “Hosanna!” when Jesus had arrived in Jerusalem. They had watched in horror as Jesus was arrested. They had cried when Jesus was killed on the cross.

The two friends were puzzled. They knew Jesus’ body had been put in a tomb. Now the tomb was empty. Some women said that they had gone to the tomb and seen an angel. The angel told them Jesus was alive. What could it mean?

As they were walking along the road, a stranger came and began walking with them. “What have you been talking about as you walk along?” he asked.

The two friends looked at the man in astonishment. “Are you the only person in Jerusalem who doesn’t know what happened? Surely you’ve heard about Jesus of Nazareth (NAZ-uh-rehth)? He was a prophet sent by God. He was arrested and put to death on a cross. That was three days ago. Today some women friends went to his tomb and couldn’t find his body. They said they met angels who told them Jesus is alive.”

“I see you don’t understand what has happened,” the stranger said. “Let me explain it to you.”

The stranger began to tell the two friends many stories about God. He started at the beginning and told them all the stories that pointed to Jesus. He was a wonderful storyteller. The two friends began to feel much better. Their hearts were filled with joy and hope as they listened.

The three of them arrived at Emmaus just as it was getting dark. The stranger kept walking, but the two friends said, “Please stay with us.” They invited the man to eat with them. When they sat at the table, the stranger took the bread, said a prayer, and broke the bread just as Jesus used to do. Suddenly the friends realized it *was* Jesus! He was alive! They reached out to touch him, but Jesus was gone.

The two friends were so excited they had to tell everyone. They didn’t care that it was almost dark. They didn’t care that they had walked for hours. They jumped up and ran all the way back to Jerusalem to find the other disciples. “Jesus is alive!” they shouted. “We saw him on the road! He spoke to us! We recognized him when he broke the bread.”



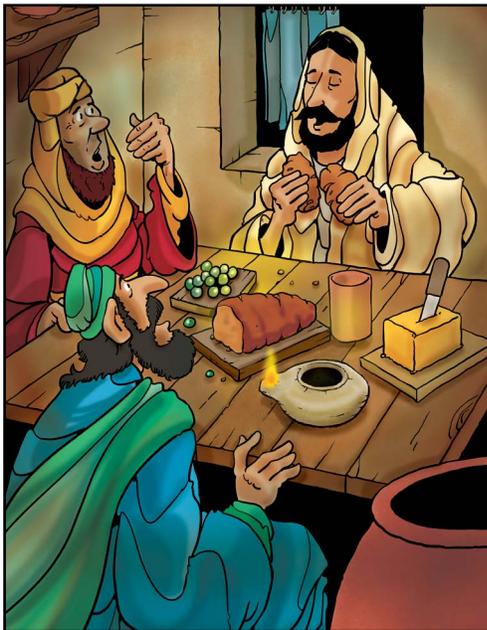
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Jesus' friends went for a walk and remembered. Create a memory walking tour. Label locations in your home or yard as places where Jesus was in Jerusalem, such as the temple, upper room, Herod's palace, garden, Golgotha, and tomb. After identifying locations, walk from place to place and retell the story of what happened at each location.
- Jesus was with his friends in Jerusalem and in Emmaus. Draw a picture of one place where you feel that Jesus is always with you.



Responding to God's Grace

- A stranger helped the friends to recognize Jesus. Think about strangers you see or pass every day. Say prayers for these strangers. For example, "Dear, God, please be with the lady at the store. Dear, God, help the man on the bus."
- Jesus was recognized in the breaking and blessing of bread. Make a loaf of bread together. When the baked bread is cool, take turns passing the bread, tearing off a piece, and inviting Jesus to be with you in one of your daily places.
- Sometimes people who are scared, sad, or lonely do not know that Jesus is always with them. Make a bookmark that says, "Jesus is always with you." Give the bookmark to someone who needs a reminder of Jesus' love and presence.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- In celebration of Jesus' presence in the breaking of bread, invite your children to write or draw a communion prayer on an index card. Laminate the prayers with self-stick plastic to make them durable. Put the prayers with other things that often go to church—a Bible, a worship bag, or a purse. Give your children their prayers during communion to help them remember. For example, a communion prayer might say, "Thank you, Jesus, for this meal that reminds me you are always with me. Amen." or "Dear God, when I hear about the bread being broken, I remember Jesus. Thank you for Jesus. Amen."
- Pray this prayer this week:

*God, thank you for always being with me.
Amen.*