Summary of Today’s Story

On the day that Jesus’ tomb is found empty, Cleopas and his companion, who were followers of Jesus, are on their way to a village called Emmaus. They are talking about the events of the past few days, including the rumor that Jesus had been seen alive. Jesus meets up with them and begins talking with them and teaching them about the fulfillment of the Scriptures, “beginning with Moses and all the prophets” all the way to himself.

When they come to the village, the two people urge Jesus to stay and have supper with them. As Jesus takes the bread, blesses and breaks it and gives it to them, they suddenly recognize him. And then he vanishes.

Where You’ll Find Today’s Story

In the Bible
We recommend the New Revised Standard Version Bible.

In Children’s Bibles
If you plan to use a children’s Bible for storytelling, write the page numbers of today’s story in the space below.

In Our Sunday Lectionary
Today’s story is told in church on the following Sunday:
Year A, B, C: Easter Day (evening service); Wednesday in Easter week
Year A: Third Sunday of Easter
Weaving Our Story with the Biblical Story

Many of us would envy Cleopas and his companion who, quite by chance, meet Jesus on the road to Emmaus and invite him to dinner, then receive his first “breaking of the bread” after his resurrection. Would we be as open as they were to recognize Jesus in that sacramental action, which probably had his distinctive stamp? Would we, not knowing who he is, have even invited him to dinner?

Often the emphasis in this story is on the gradual opening of the eyes of these individuals—how they encounter this stranger and are taught by him, then how they eat with him. They begin with sadness and hopelessness that their Savior has been killed, though “we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel” (Luke 24:21). They are confused, having heard that this savior, who was condemned to death and crucified, might now be alive. Think of how vulnerable they are, wrestling with their feelings of despair and confusion.

Sometimes it is when we are most vulnerable that we are most open to the spirit of God. Sometimes it is when we are most hurt that we recognize most our dependence on God. Former Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold once talked about having an “undefended heart.” This is a heart that is open to the Holy Spirit, open to being met on our journey by Jesus, open to being moved by God’s Word. When we go to church, when we pray, when we read the Scriptures, when we share our faith, we practice opening our heart to God.

Then, when we come to church on Sunday, we can pray sincerely and fervently the opening prayer (the Collect for Purity, as it is called, BCP 355): “Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

The Episcopal Thread

“Risen Lord, be known to us in the breaking of the bread.”

This is one of the people’s responses in Eucharistic Prayer C (BCP, 372) after the celebrant has prayed that “the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ, that we may worthily serve the world in his name.”

If we look at the plot line of the journey to Emmaus story, we can see the outline of the story that runs through the Episcopal Church’s service of Holy Eucharist. There is the Word spoken to us: the conversation “beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures” (Luke 24:27). Then there is the Holy Communion, the breaking of the bread: “when he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them” (Luke 24:30).

The service of Holy Eucharist is similarly balanced between Word and Sacrament. Neither takes precedence over the other. The Liturgy of the Word, also called in the Prayer Book “The Word of God,” includes readings from the Hebrew Scriptures, Psalms, the Epistles, and the Gospels—all the scriptures.” A relatively brief homily follows to interpret and shed light on the readings. Then the gathered community responds to the truths given in the Word with the Nicene Creed in which we profess our faith, the Prayers of the People, the Confession with its absolution, and finally, “The peace of the Lord be always with you.”

In the story in Luke, the three people share their stories and then arrive at Emmaus and share a meal. In the same way in worship, after the lessons, the gathered community arrives at the altar of the Lord
and shares a meal. We pray, “Risen Lord, be known to us in the breaking of the bread.” And then we, like Cleopas and his friend, recognize Jesus in the sacramental act, and our eyes are opened. Then we, like them, go out into the world and proclaim to all that Jesus has risen and is among us.

### Gathering

As the children enter the room, engage them in a simple activity that relates to today’s lesson. On page 8, you’ll find a Gathering Activity handout to use if you wish. Below are other suggestions.

For younger children, you might have crayons and paper available, and invite them to draw a picture of their home.

For older children, you might simply allow a few minutes for them to reconnect with one another and share what they have been doing during the past week. This social time is important for building relationships and community.

After all the children have arrived and had a few minutes of activity or fellowship time, gather them together and say a simple opening prayer, such as this one:

- O God, here we are. We come to hear the story of your Son Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. Bless this time that we have together, and bless us all. 
  
  Amen.

### Telling the Story

Read today’s story aloud from a children’s Bible, showing the pictures, or tell the story in your own words.

When you tell the story, set this stage. This is a drama that begins with tragedy and fear and ends with astounding news: Jesus is alive after all! How did this happen?

There are two ways that you can set the stage for the story. In one “stage,” begin the story while standing together in a corner of the room, and end it at one of your classroom tables, as you read or say, “So he went to stay with them.” Then have everybody sit down as you tell about Jesus breaking bread.

For a second option, set the “stage” like a liturgy in church, with two stations: one, with the Bible representing the Word of God, and the other with bread representing the Holy Communion. Tell the story, leading the children from one station to the other, making the connection between the movement of the two people in the story and the movement of the Church in the Eucharist.

Let the children hear the story without analyzing it for them or discussing it. For now, simply let the story sink into their minds and hearts. Later, while having snacks, you can bring up the story again and invite the children to talk about it and explore its message.
Prayer

Set up a small worship center in your room.

Materials:
- small table with a cloth to cover it
- two candles or a single large Christ candle
- matches
- Bible
- cross
- optional: flowers (real, artificial or handmade by the children)

Have the children set up a simple altar with the materials listed above. Invite them to place on the altar any drawings or crafts that they created during Gathering time. Then light the candles.

Read a verse or two of today’s scripture from a Bible so that the children connect the story they heard with the Bible, which is the word of God. If working mainly with older children, you might expand the reading to several verses.

Suggestions for the reading:

For younger children: Luke 24:30-31

Help the children become familiar with our liturgy by doing the reading as it is done in church. Read as follows:

Reader: A reading from the Gospel of Luke:
(Read the selected passage.)

Reader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Invite the children to sit in a circle and join in prayer. Say a brief prayer yourself, then invite prayers from each child in the circle:

- Invite prayers of thanks for God’s work in our lives during the past week. Ask children to remember when they have been aware of God's love and blessings, whether in school or at home, with friends or family or strangers.
- Welcome any prayers of concern or petition. Children may offer prayers for themselves or for others in need or trouble, including community needs such as food and shelter for the poor.
- Ask if anyone has had a birthday or celebrated a special day during the past week and give thanks for these special times.
- End the prayer time by praying together the Lord’s Prayer.

Carefully extinguish the candles.
Sharing
Pass out the snacks and say a simple grace, like this one:

- Lord, bless this food that is set before us to feed us, and bless us also. Amen.

If you are sharing thoughts but not food, you may pray an opening invitational prayer such as:

- Lord, bless us now as we share these minutes together with you and with each other. Amen.

While sharing a snack, begin talking about the story that the children have just heard. Things to wonder about:

- If you were one of the people walking down the road, and you have been hearing about Jesus’ death and then the rumors about him being alive again, how would you feel?
- When have you ever been very, very sad, and then realized that God is with you during this time?
- How would you feel if you meet Jesus on the street? What would you say to him? What do you wish he would say to you?
- Think about Jesus breaking bread and giving it to the two friends. How do you think they recognized him in this action?

To enhance this sharing time, have pita bread on a plate. Invite the children to share with you in the breaking of the bread, and invite them to find in this action a sacred moment. Pick up the bread, break it in half, then in pieces, and pass it around. Ask:

- How does it feel to be part of this moment with Jesus?
Activities: Arts, Crafts, Games, Drama, etc.

After Sharing, begin an activity to supplement and enhance today’s story. While the children are doing an activity, talk about the story so that they make the connection. Suggested story-related activities are provided at the end of this lesson on pages 9-23.

Additional activity ideas can be found on pages 3-6 in the Appendix (also downloadable) where we’ve suggested a variety of general activities that can be adapted to any lesson. For example, you can make puppets to use in a dramatic re-telling of this story. Also included are outreach and service projects that can be done at any time.
Memorization

This reference to Luke 24:35 is part of the people’s response in Eucharistic Prayer C: “Risen Lord, be known to us in the breaking of the bread.” This is simple, and can be used as a daily prayer at any time.

Suggestions for ways to help the children with their memorization can be found on page 15 in the Appendix (also downloadable).

Weaving God’s Beloved Community

God’s beloved community is woven as our own stories connect to the story of God and to the stories of the people around us.

As your time together draws to a close, take a few minutes to help the children summarize the story and say what they learned today by asking questions such as:

- What was our story about today?
- Who was the stranger the two people met on the road?
- What does this story say about Jesus?
- What in this story reminds you of our church service?

To help the children remember today’s story, remind them of these key words or phrases:

- Meeting Jesus on the road
- Breaking of the bread
- Eyes were opened

Closing Prayer

Before the children leave, say a closing prayer to send them into the church worship service or back to their homes with God’s love and blessing. The prayer can be very simple, such as this one:

- Lord Jesus Christ, you always meet us where we are, and you walk with us wherever we go. Be with us this week and help us to see you and meet you every day, and in every person we see. Amen.

End with a dismissal used in church, such as:

- Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

The children respond:

- Thanks be to God!
GATHERING ACTIVITY

WHICH WAY TO EMMANUS?

Look at all these footsteps on the road. Which ones lead to a place called Emmaus?
Children make a pop-up card with “Gospel eyes” that illustrate the bread and wine of Eucharist. When Jesus taught the two people on the road to Emmaus, he talked about the Scriptures in a way that gave them new gospel eyes that see through the lens of the “good news,” the gospel.

Materials:
- plain white paper, 2 sheets per child
- markers
- scissors
- glue

Page 10 illustrates the steps for making this pop-up card.

Directions:
Invite each child to make a card as follows:

1. Take one sheet of paper and fold it in half crosswise. Unfold it and then fold the top and bottom edges of the paper up to the center fold, so that the two edges meet at the center fold. The paper will have three folds.
2. On the top and the bottom folds, make a cut around 2” deep near the middle of the crease.
3. Fold back the paper on each side of the cut to make two triangle flaps.
4. Open up the paper. Lay it down like a v (“valley” folds).
5. For each cut, push one of the triangle flaps up and pinch the edges together above the card. Repeat for the other triangle.
6. Refold the paper along the two outer folds. Push down the triangle folds to make them well creased. When you open the paper, you will have two pop-up eyes that will open and close as you fold and unfold the paper.
7. Place a second sheet of paper on the table and spread glue along the edges. Then press the pop-up sheet on top of it, very carefully. Don’t glue near the eyelid area or the eyes won’t open.
8. Carefully fold the two sheets together so that the second sheet folds match the two outer folds on the first sheet.
9. Fold the card closed, so that you have a “double door” in the front. On the doors, draw a picture of an ordinary meal setting.
10. Open the card. Behind the “eyelids” (triangle flaps), draw the bread and wine of the Eucharist—bread behind one eye and wine or chalice behind the other.

11. Fill in the inside of the card by drawing an eye and eyelid shape around the cut-out eyes.
Children play this simple “walking” game, sung to the tune “Waltzin’ Matilda.”

**Materials:**
- paper favor cups
- foam sheets, poster board, construction paper or felt squares (depending on how sturdy you want the “feet”)
- glue
- scissors
- little trinkets and treats: goldfish or other animal crackers, tiny crosses, simple prayers on fortune-cookie-sized paper, charms (*no nuts or gum, however!*)

**Before playing:**
Invite the children to prepare for the game as follows:
- Trace one footprint on the paper, foam or felt.
- Glue a favor cup on the top of the foot.
- Put little trinkets or treats inside the cup. You can put one of each item, or several of the same item, or whatever you choose.

**Directions:**
1. Invite the children to sit around a table or in a circle on the floor and put their “walking feet” in front of them.
2. Sing the “Walk to Emmaus” song and as long as the music continues, pass the shoes to the child on your right.
3. When the singing stops, each child should have a walking foot in front of him or her, but probably not his or hers. Look inside of the cup and see what’s there. You can take out the items and keep them.
4. Fill the foot with new things and play again.
5. Take your walking foot home with your holy treasures.

**Song:**
“Walk to Emmaus,” sung to the tune of “Waltzin’ Matilda’

*Walk to Emmaus, walk to Emmaus,*
*Walk to Emmaus, Emmaus today.*
*And if Jesus comes by, to open up our eyes,*
*We’ll walk to Emmaus every day.*
Children layer index cards and color them with eyes and other facial features and symbols of love. In today’s story the eyes of the people on their way to Emmaus “were kept from recognizing [Jesus]”. Later, “their eyes were opened, and they recognized him” (Luke 24:16, 31).

**Materials:**
- 4” x 6” index cards, 3 per child
- scissors
- glue or tape
- markers or crayons

**Directions:**
Invite each child to make the opening eyes as follows:

1. Use the cards blank side up (no lines).
2. On one card, cut out two eye shapes. Children may need adult help doing this.
3. Lay this card on top of another card. Glue or tape the two sides and the bottom together, along the edges. Leave the top open.
4. Behind each “open eye” cutout, on the bottom card, draw a small heart.
5. Cut 1½” off the width of the third card. The third card will go in between the other two cards and will be lifted up with the cut-off part, which will serve as a tab.
6. Tape or glue the cut-off 4” x 1½” tab to the top of the third card, attaching to the back of the card. At least 2” of the tab should stick up from the top.
7. Slide this card in between the other two cards so that the heart pictures are covered up.
8. The front card will look like a partial face with eyes. Fill in the face. You may also fill in eyelids, on the portion of the middle card that is showing.
9. When you use the tab to lift up the middle card, the “eyes” will open to reveal hearts.

Older children may be encouraged to replace the heart picture with a symbol or picture of Jesus, or of something that has demonstrated Jesus’ presence in their lives.
HIDDEN HEARTS
Primary, Elementary

Children make a heart basket out of construction paper and make a Jesus figure with a hidden heart inside.

Materials:
- heart pattern (p. 15), 1 per child
- Jesus pictures, front and back (p. 16), 1 per child
- red construction paper
- crayons
- scissors
- glue

Preparation:
Make a copy of the heart and Jesus patterns for each child (pp. 15-16).

Directions:
Invite each child to make a heart as follows:

1. Cut out the heart pattern and trace it onto red construction paper. You will need to mark the folds by looking at the pattern.
2. Assemble the heart, folding where indicated and gluing at the tabs. This will be your heart that holds Jesus.
3. Cut out the two pictures of Jesus and color them.
4. Draw a small heart design on red paper and cut out.
5. Glue the front and back of Jesus together, leaving the bottom open.
6. Carefully slip the small heart inside the Jesus figure, “wander.”
7. Glue the bottom edge shut.
8. Place the Jesus figure inside the heart basket.
Put glue on this tab.
Children create a picture that shows Jesus appearing between them and a friend, as he did with the two people walking toward Emmaus. Jesus is always walking with us, but we don’t always see or recognize him.

**Materials:**
- white paper
- people patterns, two children and Jesus (p. 18), 1 per child
- scissors
- glue
- *optional:* tape or stapler
- crayons

**Preparation:**
Make a copy of the people pictures for each child. An adult may need to do the cutting for younger children.

**Directions:**
Invite each child to make a picture as follows:

1. Color and cut out the pictures of the children and Jesus. Young children will need adult help in cutting.

2. Place the white paper landscape-style. Cut two parallel vertical slits on the paper, around 3” apart and 4” long. The picture of Jesus will come up from behind the paper through one slit, then down through the other one.

3. Glue one child to the left of the left slit, and the other child to the right of the right slit. This will leave a blank space in between the two slits.

4. Take another piece of white paper and cut it lengthwise, to make a piece 3” x 11½”.

5. Insert this paper up, through and then down the first paper, so that a portion shows between the slits, between the two children.

6. On the part that is showing, glue the picture of Jesus.

7. To make Jesus appear and disappear from our sight, move the second paper back and forth.
WALKING FOOTPRINTS
Preschool, Primary

Children trace a shoe on paper and make footprints to create a path across the classroom.

Materials:
- shoe
- paper
- crayons

Directions:
Invite each child to make a set of footprints as follows:

1. Place the shoe bottom on the paper and outline the shoe.
2. Draw a picture or the tread pattern of your shoe inside the outline.
3. Cut out the footprint.
4. Make several of feet, turning half of them over to decorate the opposite foot, so that you have pairs of feet. Tape them to the walls of your room. You can make it look as though you climbed right up the side of the room!
Healing Balm

Primary

Children combine lotion, food coloring and glitter to make a soothing balm. Like a healing balm, Jesus’ presence with the two men healed their wounds and mended their broken hearts.

Materials:
- body lotion
- tiny containers with lids, 1 per child
- food coloring in different colors
- superfine glitter or body glitter
- cotton swabs

Directions:
Invite each child to make balm as follows:

1. Put body lotion into the small container.
2. Add food coloring to create a beautiful color.
3. Add glitter for a sparkly balm.
4. Dip the cotton swab in the lotion and add to hands or arms.
Children try this scientific activity to explore how a compass—an early Global Positioning System—points the way. For the two people on the road to Emmaus, Jesus was a compass, showing them how to find the true North—God.

**Materials:**
- needle
- bar magnet
- straight pin
- empty margarine tub
- cork (around ¼" thick)
- pitcher of water
- liquid dish soap

**Showing:**
Invite the children to make and test the compass as follows:

1. Magnetize the needle to make the needle attract other metal things. Rub the end of the bar magnet over the needle around 40 times. Always use the same end of the magnet and stroke the needle in the same direction; otherwise, this will not work.

2. Test the magnet by picking up a straight pin with it. If it works, move to the next step. If it doesn’t work, continue to stroke the needle with the magnet.

3. Poke the needle into the cork so that the needle will float. Poke it through the cork from side to side, not top to bottom. The needle should stick out at both ends.

4. Fill the margarine tub half full of water and add a few drops of liquid dish soap.

5. Put the cork in the water and see it turning to face a single direction—north. Turn the tub and watch the needle continue to point in the same direction.

6. Discuss how Jesus is like our compass, and what he did and said (talked about the Scriptures, shared bread and wine) to be the compass pointing to God for Cleopas and his companion.
THE LIGHT OF JESUS:
A COLOR CHANGER
AND LIFE CHANGER
Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

Children create bright-colored crosses on a contrasting black background using bleach and construction paper.

Materials:
- black construction paper
- cotton swabs
- paper bowls
- newspaper
- bleach
- old shirts to protect clothing

Directions:
Invite each child to make a picture as follows:

1. Cover a table with newspaper to protect the surface. On the newspaper, set out bowls of bleach, cotton swabs and black paper. If possible, darken the room.

2. Dip a cotton swab into the bleach and draw a cross on the paper. The bleach will color the picture a bright orange.

3. Have children use the swabs to write: “Jesus turns darkness to light.”

4. Other pictures may be drawn on the paper to embellish the paper.

5. The love, knowledge and light that Jesus gives to us changes our darkness to light!
Children decorate T-shirts for themselves with colorful hearts using a dye is made from drink mix and vinegar.

**Materials:**
- clean white T-shirts, 1 per child
- packets of unsweetened drink mix in several colors
- white vinegar
- measuring cup
- small bowls
- cotton swabs
- black fabric marker
- cardboard pieces to fit inside T-shirts
- plastic garbage bags, or paint shirts
- scissors
- rubber bands

**Directions:**
Invite each child to make a shirt as follows:

1. Pour each packet of drink mix into a bowl. Add ¼ cup white vinegar.

2. Insert a piece of cardboard into the t-shirt so the color doesn’t run to the back.

3. Draw a large heart on the front of the shirt with the fabric marker.

4. Put on a large garbage bag or paint shirt to protect your clothing.

5. Paint the heart with the colors. You may use different colors to add shapes or other decorations inside the heart.


7. *To adults:* When dry, press with a pressing cloth. Then let it sit for 10 hours. Then wash on gentle cycle and tumble dry.