

Read

Acts 2:14, 22-33

Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-8,
9-10

1 Peter 1:17-21

Luke 24:13-35

Third Sunday of Easter

April 23, 2023



REFLECTION

In *The Two Towers*, three of the main characters, Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas, spot an old man walking through the woods nearby. When they catch up with him, he begins chatting with them in a friendly way, revealing an uncanny knowledge of their journey and suggesting they stop to talk for a while. For a moment, they think he might be an enemy, but when he raises his staff in a characteristic gesture, they suddenly recognize him as the wizard Gandalf and are overjoyed to find that he is alive. His presence gives them new hope and courage for their quest.

The parallels with the Gospel reading of the travelers on the road to Emmaus are obvious. Although Jesus talks with the disciples for some time, they don't recognize him until he blesses and breaks the bread. Understanding the Scriptures wasn't enough; it is only when the disciples recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread that they find the courage to return to Jerusalem. Experiencing Christ's faithfulness and friendship allows us to turn to our challenges with fresh hope and confidence.



ACTION

When we gather to share our confusion, fears, and hopes with open hearts, Jesus is present. Make plans to spend face-to-face time together with someone you trust and connect with. You might share a meal, as Jesus did with his disciples. If this person is also a Christian, ask them whether you can pray together for any concerns you each have. Invite Jesus to join you on your journeys!



Read (or watch) the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ In what ways do you recognize Jesus present during the Mass?
- ❖ Whom do you share your confusion with when you're scared or don't understand something?



April 23, 2023

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

LECTIONARY #46A

Acts 2:14, 22-33

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1 Peter 1:17-21

Luke 24:13-35

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

On their journey to Emmaus, two of Jesus' disciples are walking along and talking about the incredible events they witnessed. A stranger approaches them and begins speaking with them. Even though he breaks open the Scriptures for their understanding, they don't recognize him as Jesus until he breaks bread with them. This week, help the teens open their hearts to encounter Christ in their daily lives and in the Mass.

Q FOCUS: *We encounter Christ in the Mass in various ways, but especially in the Eucharist.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On April 25, we celebrate the feast day of St. Mark the Evangelist. Mark is one of the Gospel writers, and he is an important figure in our faith tradition. His Gospel is considered one of the synoptic Gospels, as it shares many parallels with the Gospel accounts given by Luke and Matthew. This week we also celebrate the feast of St. Catherine of Siena, a Doctor of the Church, on April 29. Catherine lived in the late fourteenth century and was a member of the Third Order of the Dominicans. She was a holy, prayerful, and joyful woman who worked to bring peace within the Church.

Church Teaching Connection

"Jesus then repeats for the disciples the fundamental gesture of every Eucharist. He takes bread, blesses it, breaks it and gives it. Does not Jesus' entire history perhaps lie in this series of gestures? . . . Jesus' encounter with the two disciples of Emmaus is a fleeting one. But the entire destiny of the Church is contained within it. It tells us that the Christian community is not enclosed within a fortified citadel, but rather journeys along its most essential environment, which is the road" (Pope Francis, General Audience, May 24, 2017).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 24:13-35

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

That very day, the first day of the week, two of Jesus' disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of

the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see." And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?" So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

As two disciples are heading to the town of Emmaus from Jerusalem, they meet a stranger. As they walk, they are talking about all of the incredible things that they witnessed in Jerusalem. The stranger begins to talk with them. The disciples begin to tell the stranger about what transpired in Jerusalem. They are animatedly telling the stranger, wondering whether he has heard the stories about Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

In the 24/7 news cycle, some stories rise to the top and it seems like everyone is talking about them. A similar thing happens with events at home, in school, or in the community. When we encounter people who haven't heard the news, we can hardly believe it and immediately start to share our take on it.

- ▶ Have you ever done this or seen something similar happen? Was it good news or bad news? How did others react when they heard the news?
- ▶ Why might we feel the need to share news over and over?

In an interesting twist, Jesus, the one who "hadn't heard the news" is the one to give his take on what happened, explaining it to the disciples. They would have been familiar with the Scriptures Jesus was referencing, but he was opening their hearts to understand it in a new way in connection with his life, death, and resurrection. Jesus is sharing with them the story of salvation history, of which he is the culmination. They don't fully recognize him until he literally breaks bread with them.

- ▶ Where have you recognized Christ's presence? In the ordinary? In the extraordinary?

At Mass, we encounter Christ in the breaking of the bread, just like those disciples on the way to Emmaus: we encounter the real presence of Jesus in

the Eucharist. The Church also teaches that Christ is present in the assembly, in the priest, and in the Word (see *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 7). The Eucharist stands out above all of these ways Christ is present, though, because it is food for our journey of discipleship, brings us into the Body of Christ, and strengthens us to be Christ for one another.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 168.

On the road to Emmaus, the disciples do not recognize a stranger.

Jesus explains the strange events and reveals himself as the risen Christ.

A familiar action, the breaking and blessing of the bread reveals Christ.

Act on the Word

Baking and Breaking Bread

For this activity, you will need a recording of the song, "In the Breaking of the Bread" by Michael Ward and copies of its lyrics (you might find this in your parish's hymnal).

Ingredients listed below to make unleavened bread are also needed, as well as rolling pins or cups, circular cookie cutters, forks, and baking sheets. If you do not have access to an oven where your group meets, send home directions for the teens to bake the bread at home.

In this activity, the young people will make their own unleavened bread using a very simple recipe, detailed below. Before making the dough, play the song, "In the Breaking of the Bread," by Michael Ward for the teens. If possible, give them a copy of the lyrics of the song for them to follow along with as they listen. Then spend a few minutes discussing the meaning of the song and how it relates to the story of the

disciples on the road to Emmaus and to the lives of the young people.

If there are a large number of teens, divide them into two or three groups. Each group can make one batch of unleavened bread. For each batch, you will need: 3 cups of flour, 1 cup of hot water, 2 tablespoons of olive oil, 2 teaspoons of honey, and 1 teaspoon of salt.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Mix all of the ingredients together in a bowl, and then place the dough on a floured surface. Knead the dough for three minutes. Roll the dough out to about 1/8 inch thick. Cut circles out on the dough, with a cookie cutter or the top of the glass. Place the rounds on a baking sheet. Prick each circle twice with a fork. Bake for five to eight minutes.

After the bread has cooled, invite the teens to taste it. This is not the same as the wafers that are used in the Eucharist, but this bread is more similar to the bread the disciples and Jesus would have shared after their journey.

Closing Prayer

*Ever-loving and eternal God,
in the mystery of the Eucharist,
you have bestowed upon us the singular
gift of your Son, Jesus Christ.*

*May our lives be a constant witness
to the love we have received
and to the eternal joy that we
have inherited.*

*Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.