

A photograph of three figures in traditional robes walking away from the viewer on a dirt road. The scene is set at sunset or sunrise, with long shadows cast on the ground and a warm, golden light in the sky. The figures are positioned in the lower half of the frame, walking towards the horizon.

ON THE ROAD TOGETHER: EMMAUS

SHARING LIFE AND FAITH

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with

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FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF THE NEWMAN MINISTRY AT CAL BERKELEY, 2025-2025

Paulist Evangelization Ministries
Washington, DC 20017

ON THE ROAD TOGETHER: EMMAUS

*uses some of the dynamics of the Synodal Process
to provide people a way to share about faith and life issues
from the perspective of faith.*

*The story of the **Road to Emmaus** (Luke 24:13-35) provides a process-
outline.*

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Published by Paulist Evangelization Ministries
PO Box 29121
Washington, DC 20017
www.pemdc.org

ON THE ROAD TOGETHER: EMMAUS is a faith-sharing series for small groups that can be done in person or virtually.

It has six sessions based on the unfolding of the story of the walk to Emmaus told in Luke 24:13-35.

Each session follows this sequence:

(1) Welcome and Introductions

A time for participants to gather, either in person or virtually, and introduce themselves and share personal updates since the previous session.

(2) Quiet Reflection

A time for participants to reflect on an experience from their own lives before a passage from Scripture is read.

(3) Scripture and Reflection Input

A theme in the Scripture passage is introduced and expanded upon through a “narrator” who elaborates on the verses. The narration comes in the form of embedded videos for each session. In addition, it can be read slowly.

(4) Reflection Questions

A time for participants to explore and discuss the theme.

(5) Journaling and Integrating

A time for journaling or drawing to integrate one’s feelings/thoughts. These exercises are designed to help participants integrate their lives with the reading and theme.

(6) Group Sharing (on the journaling and integrating results or the theme)

(7) Open Questions

A time for participants to ask questions of the group leader or the group.

(8) Prayer

Echoes of psalms, other Scripture readings, common prayers, etc.

(9) Hospitality

Participants can be asked to rotate in procuring/providing drinks and light snacks for each session.

The six themes covered are:

1. **Confused and Exploring**
2. **The Paschal Mystery**
3. **Jesus Explains: A Story**
4. **Jesus Abides: Community**
5. **Jesus Breaks Bread**
6. **They Go Forth and Bear Witness**

* * *

GROUP LEADERS

Groups of different sizes can be formed, but there should be fewer than twelve participants in any group. Each group should have a Group Leader who leads the group through the various sessions. Group leaders have an important role in helping members feel comfortable and included in the group, keeping the discussion centered on sharing, and asking various participants to take various sections of the session (e.g., reading Scripture, leading the concluding prayer experience, hospitality, etc.).

Group leaders should emphasize that the purpose of the group is to be able to share about participants lives and the story of Emmaus. Required for this are:

1. A welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.
2. The group's agreement to keep things discussed in the group confidential to the group.
3. Avoidance of arguments about Scripture or Church teaching.
4. A desire to grow as a follower of Jesus.
5. Making sure the sessions last about one hour and fifteen minutes so as to honor the participants' schedules.

Group leaders will be responsible for sharing the PDF material with the participants. Group leaders need to respect the rules of distribution of this program. Distribution is limited to those who have contracted to use the program for a set time in a parish or some other setting. People are not free to send copies of **ON THE ROAD TOGETHER: EMMAUS** to those who do not belong to a parish group or particular pastoral setting (e.g., campus ministry, school, etc.).

SESSION 1. CONFUSED AND EXPLORING

Cleopas and his partner are escaping Jerusalem; they cannot figure out what happened to Jesus.

In our own lives, we are often confused about our past faith experience and we look for ways to explore. Our faith encourages us to create space to explore, question, search . . . and find.

Welcome and Introductions

The group leader invites participants to introduce themselves briefly, making sure all participants feel connected to the group.

Quiet Reflection

The group leader asks participants to reflect on a time in their lives when they felt down and/or depressed and think about whatever caused those feelings.

Scripture

One of the participants reads aloud the Scripture (Luke 24:13-24).

Now that very day two of them 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."

Narrator

CLICK ON THE LINK FOR A VIDEO PRESENTATION OF THE NARRATION

[Session 1. Confused and Exploring](#)

Of course, they wanted to get away. They had heavily invested in following Jesus, filled with hope that Jesus was going to redeem Israel. Instead of a crushing victory, Jesus gave them a humiliating defeat. What are we supposed to do when we put all our eggs in a basket and the basket falls out of our hands?

These two leaving Jerusalem as soon as they could represent many human beings at different moments of discouragement. These two thought they could walk their grief away. If they changed locations, if they returned to what they were before they met Jesus, then maybe their grief would lessen or even stop.

Too bad grief doesn't work that way. Our grief cannot be walked away from. It stays with us because grief touches the deepest areas of our connections with each other. Who we are is wrapped up with the people to whom we belong. When those people leave us, or are taken away, then we cannot feel the same way as before.

So deep is their grief that these two cannot sense the presence of Jesus when he walks along beside them. "Their eyes were prevented from seeing Jesus." And what made that happen? Had they already put Jesus in the mental box they labeled "no more"? Had their feeling of defeat already wiped the presence of Jesus from their senses?

These two people escaping Jerusalem, longing for the days of old, represent a lot of people today who have lost contact with what they knew of Jesus or felt about Jesus, who stand suspended between a memory and a cloudy future, whose faith lingers like the image of a former friend whose name we have trouble remembering.

Yet there they are, the three of them, walking along the road. Two of them thought they knew where this journey would end up, but Jesus knew better.

Reflection Questions

When have been times when you felt most like Cleopas and his companion? When have you felt derailed and defeated? What happened to you after this experience?

Journaling and Integrating

Draw a timeline from your birth to the present—a straight line with the date of your birth at one end and the current year at the other. Above the line, write the significant moments of your faith life (e.g., sacraments, retreats, etc.); below the line, write the people you associate with those events (e.g., family members, friends, mentors, etc.). Spend a few minutes thinking about the companions who have been with you on the journey.

Birth Year

Current Year

Group Sharing

At the end of the exercise, participants share the patterns they noticed as they drew their timelines.

Open Questions

Participants may ask any questions they have as a result of the reflection and discussion so far. The group leader helps gather the ideas of the group and formulate a response.

Prayer

The group recites together Psalm 23:1-6.

A psalm of David.

The LORD is my shepherd;
there is nothing I lack.
In green pastures he makes me lie down;
to still waters he leads me;
he restores my soul.
He guides me along right paths
for the sake of his name.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff comfort me.

You set a table before me
in front of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Indeed, goodness and mercy will pursue me
all the days of my life;
I will dwell in the house of the LORD
for endless days.

Participants share whatever spontaneous prayers they have and the session concludes with praying the Our Father.

Hospitality

SESSION 2. THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

The death and Resurrection of Jesus provide pivotal moments of reflection for everyone. What does it mean to be executed because one tried to do good? What does it mean to conquer death and defeat? How do we experience these things in our lives?

Welcome and Introductions

The group leader invites participants, particularly any new participants, to introduce themselves.

Quiet Reflection

The group leader asks participants to reflect on a time in their lives when, all of a sudden, things turned around for the better and burdens were lifted.

Scripture

One of the participants reads aloud the Scripture (Luke 24:22-24).

“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.”

Narrator

CLICK ON THE LINK FOR A VIDEO PRESENTATION OF THE NARRATION

[Session 2. The Paschal Mystery](#)

Astounded. The word can mean many things.

Women had seen things. Did that make the two people on the road immediately suspicious, as if women could not be trusted to report something that had blown their minds? A vision of angels . . . with a message that was as frightening as it was puzzling. They were announcing that Jesus was alive.

These two on the road had no stomach for this kind of message. Their attitudes were already formed: Jesus was a failure and his mission was an illusion. Who were these women to come and upset the feelings that had already progressed down the road of grief?

But it was enough to get some of the Apostles moving. The women had come in grief to visit the place of Jesus' burial. The Apostles now come in puzzlement. Were they coming to see that the women were right? Or were they coming to assure themselves that the women had to be wrong? The Scriptures say that it was “just as the women had described.” Does that mean angels greeted the Apostles as well?

But “him they did not see.” Who wants to hear the words of angels when only the actual Jesus will do?

After the events that happened in Jerusalem, who would have thought that the happy ending would be the harder one to hear? Jesus’ death was bad enough. How would they make sense of Jesus if he actually had risen from the dead?

Easter involves something entirely different—something well beyond grief, something beyond ordinary human imagining. Easter looks so impossible to accept. History has mourned the deaths of leaders more than it has honored their vision, what they lived for. Perhaps it was easier for the Apostles just to accept Jesus’ death.

It takes a lot to get to Easter, to the Risen Christ, to his abiding presence, to the life of his Spirit. It takes a lot—often further than many people feel they can go. Even believers, who so casually recite the lines from the Creed “he rose from the dead,” don’t live as if Easter happened. They don’t show the hope, the joy, the conviction, the assurance of having stepped to the other side of death and found true life.

“Him they did not see.” Yet there he is, walking right beside them.

Reflection Questions

In what ways are the reactions of Cleopas and his companion perfectly reasonable? In what ways are they a total mess? Have you had anything similar happen in your life—i.e., something changed in your life but you could not believe it?

Journaling and Integrating

Spend a few moments and list (1) your top 5 favorite movies and (2) your top 5 favorite songs. As you look at these lists, what would you conclude about yourself? Do you think your peers would conclude the same thing(s) you have?

Movies

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Songs

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Group Sharing

At the end of the exercise, participants share the impressions they have from their Top 5 lists.

Open Questions

Participants may ask any questions that have arisen for the group leader or for the group to discuss.

Prayer

The group recites together Philippians 2:6-11.

[Although] he was in the form of God,
[he] did not regard equality with God
something to be grasped.
Rather, he emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
coming in human likeness;
and found human in appearance,
he humbled himself,
becoming obedient to death,
even death on a cross.

Because of this, God greatly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name
that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Participants each share a brief reaction to the passage and the session concludes with praying the Our Father.

Hospitality

SESSION 3. JESUS EXPLAINS: A STORY

Jesus explains the main elements of the Jewish Scriptures and how they pointed to him.

A chosen people form themselves and look forward with hope.

Welcome and Introductions

The group leader invites participants to share anything noteworthy or significant in their lives since the last session.

Quiet Reflection

The group leader asks participants to think about their favorite story, whether from childhood or later in life, whether in a book or movie.

Scripture

One of the participants reads aloud the Scripture (Luke 24:25-27).

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 Messiah 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.

Narrator

CLICK ON THE LINK FOR A VIDEO PRESENTATION OF THE NARRATION

[Session 3. Jesus Explains: A Story](#)

A beginning, a middle, and an end.

This way of formulating things seems quite satisfying to us. It reveals something important about human understanding: we think things have a purpose. We think things have an “end” that resolves the questions and issues that have arisen. Certainly, the proliferation of television series across cable and streaming services points in the same direction. People speak about “binge-watching” on a series, watching multiple episodes in a row because they want to know “how it will turn out.”

As our two figures escape from Jerusalem in the dark of the morning, right after the Sabbath ends and exactly when it was legal for them to start moving after the Sabbath, they are met by Jesus who gives them a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. The end is expressed simply, almost disguising the immensity of what is being said: “and enter into his glory.” But then Jesus offers a way for them to begin to understand himself and his mission. In effect, he offers them a compelling story.

Jesus brings to their minds what was probably instinctual for devout Jewish people—the stories of the Jewish people and the great songs of the prophets. Jewish experience showed a progressively deeper involvement with God, an evolution of their understanding of God and their relationship with God. Words including promised land, covenant, temple, and chosen people came to shape the way Jewish people thought of themselves. Words such as father, mother, and spouse became ways by which the Jewish people thought of God’s relationship to them.

This naturally leads Jesus to point to himself as the one who brings this relationship to its culmination. Was it not necessary, in terms of all that past history, that the Messiah was destined to suffer? Was it not necessary that the Messiah would take upon himself all the disappointments and dysfunction of his people? Was it not necessary that God would make a new covenant, sealed with the blood of Jesus and not the blood of birds and animals?

It is this narrative that begins to open the hearts and eyes of those two travelers. Could they not be part of that narrative themselves? Could they not be part of the drama God revealed in his Son, a drama that would include not only death but freedom from death as well?

Beginning, middle, and end. How could they have dreamed of an end where defeat becomes the very stuff from which resurrection and victory emerge?

Reflection Questions

The two disciples experience a change in their grief and anxiety when they get a chance to talk with Jesus and he gives them a bigger picture for their lives. Has anything similar happened to you—i.e., you had a chance to talk things out and came to a different way of framing things for yourself? If so, what was the subsequent result like?

Journaling and Integrating

Explore how narration works and can work in your life, that is, how we cast ourselves in terms of the stories we construct about the meaning of our lives. Think about your childhood/youth and teen years. Summarize these in the boxes below. Then fill in one box with how things are working out now; fill in the other box with a different story you might imagine for yourself. Then compare the two and see what you conclude.

Youth

Teen Years

What's Happening Now

What I Imagine Happening

Group Sharing

At the end of the exercise, participants share the impressions they formed from looking at their lives as a story and looking at their lives in terms of other possibilities.

Open Questions

Participants may ask any questions that have arisen for the group leader or for the group to discuss.

Prayer

Listen to the prayer of Simeon, near the end of his life, as the baby Jesus is brought into the temple (Luke 2:29-32). Imagine the way he thought about his life and how he structured his life accordingly:

“Now, Master, you may let your servant go
in peace, according to your word,
for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you prepared in sight of all the peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and glory for your people Israel.”

Participants make free petitions from their heart for concerns in their lives and the session concludes with praying the Our Father.

Hospitality

SESSION 4. JESUS ABIDES: COMMUNITY

The prophets come to represent the deepest longing of the Jewish people.

How are we all called to be prophets today?

Welcome and Introductions

The group leader invites participants to share anything noteworthy or significant in their lives since the last session.

Quiet Reflection

The group leader asks participants to think of the communities that have supported them most in life.

Scripture

One of the participants reads aloud the Scripture (Luke 24:28-29).

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.

Narrator

CLICK ON THE LINK FOR A VIDEO PRESENTATION OF THE NARRATION

[Session 4. Jesus Abides: Community](#)

Many people have moments that seem to alter the feeling of time in their lives.

Often this involves time with long and close friends: we get together after some time and feel so free with each other that time seems to be irrelevant. Sometimes this involves family members. Perhaps siblings get together, renting a house on the beach for a weekend, and time seemed to be suspended.

Suspended. Like time didn't belong anywhere, didn't deserve to be stuck or rushed. Time just floated and we seemed to be part of that. "Oh, wow, look at the time. Where did it go? It seems like we just started talking. And now hours have gone by, and I can't believe it."

Our disciples, walking unknowingly with Jesus, have entered into time like that. They arrive at Emmaus, often estimated at seven miles from Jerusalem; this means they walked for at least two hours together. But now it seems like the disciples can't believe their experience is coming to an end. "Stay with us. It's late." They are almost making excuses for Jesus to hang out longer with them.

When we think of where they were when the journey began, this turn in their feelings astounds us. They went from seeking isolation and escape to wanting to

slow things down. They went from the experience of failure to the sense that they had touched an almost magical moment of their existence. They went from leaving the other disciples to wanting to stay with this stranger who has been speaking to them.

They went from isolation to community, to that realization that their lives now involved the life of another person who, even though still a stranger, seemed so much a part of their lives. “Stay with us.” Indeed, they wanted to prolong their experience with Jesus by being in his presence a while longer. The story leaves us with the feeling that they would have been happy to talk to Jesus the whole night through.

“Stay with us.” Is there anything significant in our lives that does not involve others? Our relationship with others? How we connect with others? Although we modern people insist on a kind of hyper-individualism, we always belong somehow. We come from families who gave us life, language, attitudes . . . and perhaps even neuroses! We meet people, any one of whom can become our friends and companions. We interact with people as we make our way along the road, with their lives touching ours as much as we touch theirs.

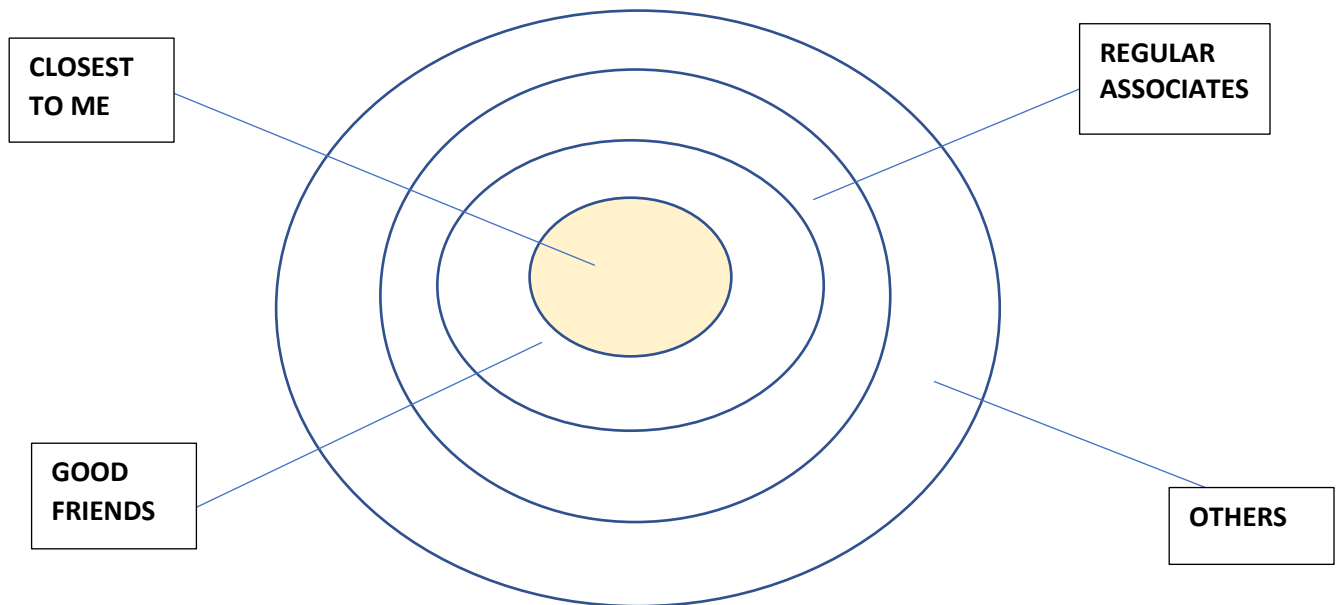
“Stay with us.” Hang together. Connect. Share. Support. Get supported. It’s as if Jesus knew his project could not continue without communities to keep it going.

Reflection Questions

In what ways has community been essential to you? In what ways do you think you contribute to community? What has the community of the Church brought into your life? What still seems missing?

Journaling and Integrating

Imagine concentric circles, maybe four of them, with the one in the center the closest. Use this image to think about community in your life. The closest one would be the community you identify with most strongly, probably, but not necessarily, your family. The next group would be the somewhat larger community you identify with, those you share with regularly such as close friends. The next group would be associates, those you work or study with. Last would be people you know in general. Reflect on how these communities contribute to your life and how you contribute to these different communities.



Group Sharing

At the end of this exercise, participants share any impressions they have from reflecting on their circles of community.

Open Questions

Participants may ask any questions that have arisen for the group leader or for the group to discuss.

Prayer

One of the participants reads aloud this passage from the Gospel of John (John 13:33-35).

My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. You will look for me, and as I told the Jews, ‘Where I go you cannot come,’ so now I say it to you. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Participants offer spontaneous prayers, particularly for the communities in which they are involved— families, friends, clubs, co-workers, civil entities, etc. —and the session concludes with praying the Our Father.

Hospitality

SESSION 5. JESUS BREAKS BREAD

Their “eyes” are opened at the breaking of the Bread.

How can the Eucharist open our eyes today?

Welcome and Introductions

The group leader invites participants to share anything noteworthy or significant in their lives since the last session.

Quiet Reflection

The group leader asks participants to think of a time when they were extremely hungry and how they felt when they could finally get something to eat.

Scripture

One of the participants reads the Scripture (Luke 24:30-32).

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?”

Narrator

CLICK ON THE LINK FOR A VIDEO PRESENTATION OF THE NARRATION
[Session 5. Jesus Breaks Bread](#)

“Their eyes were opened.”

If the two disciples were restrained from seeing Jesus, what unrestrained them? It was this: seeing Jesus do a gesture they had seen many times before. In fact, the latest time they had seen this was at the Last Supper itself, the night before Jesus was murdered. If they didn’t completely understand Jesus’ words spoken then— “This is my Body which will be given up for you”— they certainly understood them better at this point. They witnessed Jesus’ execution; they went to his tomb. But now he is breaking bread with them!

One of the basic things humans do is look for familiar traits when it comes to identifying people. How they dress, what color their hair is, even how they walk. What identifies Jesus to these disciples is the numerous times Jesus turned to his Father in thanksgiving and the exuberant joy that accompanied Jesus as he ate with people.

And he ate with all kinds of people, not just his disciples or his close followers. We see him being attacked because he ate with “tax collectors and sinners” (Matthew

11:19); he ate with some of the people most despised by the Jewish community. And now he is eating with them! They were being included in the most inclusive table ever set for humankind, the table of Jesus. They recognize Jesus, clearly risen and alive, breaking bread for them.

Jesus vanishes immediately. It seems like the last thing Jesus wanted was to be gawked at as some freak of history, an aberration, a curiosity. That's one of the tricks of Easter: we see Jesus just long enough to recognize what happened, but Jesus then leaves so that his followers can carry on his life and ministry. "Were not our hearts burning within us?" Curiously, it is only looking back on their journey with Jesus that they can begin to grasp it.

Perhaps that's true with all human experience, especially religious experience: when it is happening, we only get a taste, a hint. It's only later that we smack our heads in wonder at what happened. What did grade school mean to us? And what about our childhood friends? And how much did our parents do for us that we could not see at the time? Life is so deep we cannot experience all its layers. Meeting the risen Jesus helps our travelers to get at some of those layers.

And what about us? Some of us had a lot of religious exposure as children; some of us had much less. But when do we get the chance to look back at that, to unpack it, to see how our hearts were singing even though we didn't realize it?

Perhaps that's what keeps bringing people back to the Eucharist, to Mass. Perhaps the Eucharist is our way of recognizing the Lord in our lives . . . and finally opening our eyes.

Reflection Questions

What has been your experience of Mass, particularly of receiving Holy Communion? What are the moments when your eyes seemed opened to something amazing that you had missed before?

Journaling and Integrating

If we review our lives at this point, what might be the times we judge Jesus was distinctly present to us? On the contrary, what might be the times when we felt Jesus was particularly absent? What might be a reason or situation for each of these judgments?

When Jesus Felt Present

When Jesus Felt Absent

Group Sharing

At the end of this exercise, participants share how they have experienced a sense of Jesus' presence or a sense of his absence in their lives. What are the clues people use to identify the risen Christ in their lives?

Open Questions

Participants may ask any questions that have arisen for the group leader or for the group to discuss.

Prayer

Perhaps participants have prayed or read the ancient prayer *Anima Christi* attributed to St. Ignatius of Loyola. The group prays it aloud together and then reflects in quiet for a few moments.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water from the side of Christ, wash me. Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O good Jesus, hear me. Within your wounds hide me.

Do not allow me to be separated from you. From the malevolent enemy defend me.

In the hour of my death call me, and bid me come to you, that with your saints I may praise you forever and ever. Amen.

After the few moments of silence, participants share spontaneous prayers and the session concludes with praying the Our Father.

Hospitality

SESSION 6. THEY GO FORTH AND BEAR WITNESS

The disciples could not contain their encounter with Jesus.

How are we called to share our experience of Christ?

Welcome and Introductions

The group leader thanks participants for their involvement over the six sessions and invites them to share anything noteworthy or significant in their lives since the last session.

Quiet Reflection

The group leader asks participants to think of an amazingly happy moment in their lives, one that they had to share with others.

Scripture

One of the participants reads the Scripture (Luke 24:33-35).

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 the bread.

Narrator

CLICK ON THE LINK FOR A VIDEO PRESENTATION OF THE NARRATION

[Session 6. They Go Forth and Bear Witness](#)

They couldn't sit still.

Cleopas and his companion, who left in the early morning darkness to put the tragedy of Jesus' death behind them, are now hastening back to Jerusalem, even though it is late in the day. That would mean walking a total of fourteen miles on less-than-perfect roads. But what could they do? Late as it was, they had to move.

If we put this return to Jerusalem together with the initial story of the women who had seen angels at the tomb, then we realize that the pieces of an astonishing puzzle had come together for them. "Him they did not see" was how they put it earlier. But now they had not only seen Christ but had also walked with him, talked with him, and even eaten the bread he blessed and broke. He wasn't at the tomb, but he was certainly on the road, journeying with two skeptical followers.

When Jesus vanished from the table, he set things in motion. Because he disappeared, he left them with the question: what do I do after I have met the risen Christ? They answered the question themselves. What you do is let people know that Jesus is risen and therefore nothing is the same as it was before. They arrive in

Jerusalem to clarify things for the other disciples; the disciples, however, have their own clarity to bring. Before the two can open their mouths, the others are saying, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!” Once the Resurrection happens, there’s no stopping its excitement. There’s no stopping the message.

Perhaps many people are like the disciples early that morning. Their faith is less than a shell, and their sense of Jesus is dim and distant. Somewhere we heard the story of Jesus’ death and Resurrection, but the effect of that story doesn’t move us. Like the two on the road to Emmaus, we just want to get away. Away from church, from church people, from church rules, from church expectations. Away from a version of Jesus that lurks in a distant, childhood past.

Jesus stuck as a distant image from the past is different, however, from Jesus vanishing and sending us forth. When Jesus vanishes, he hardly leaves us alone. He continues his presence in the Bread of his body that continues to be broken, in the Sacraments that touch many moments of our lives, in the words of Scripture that echo down to today, and in our experience of the Holy Spirit. He continues his presence by sending his Holy Spirit to abide in us, to empower us, to pour God’s infinite love into our hearts.

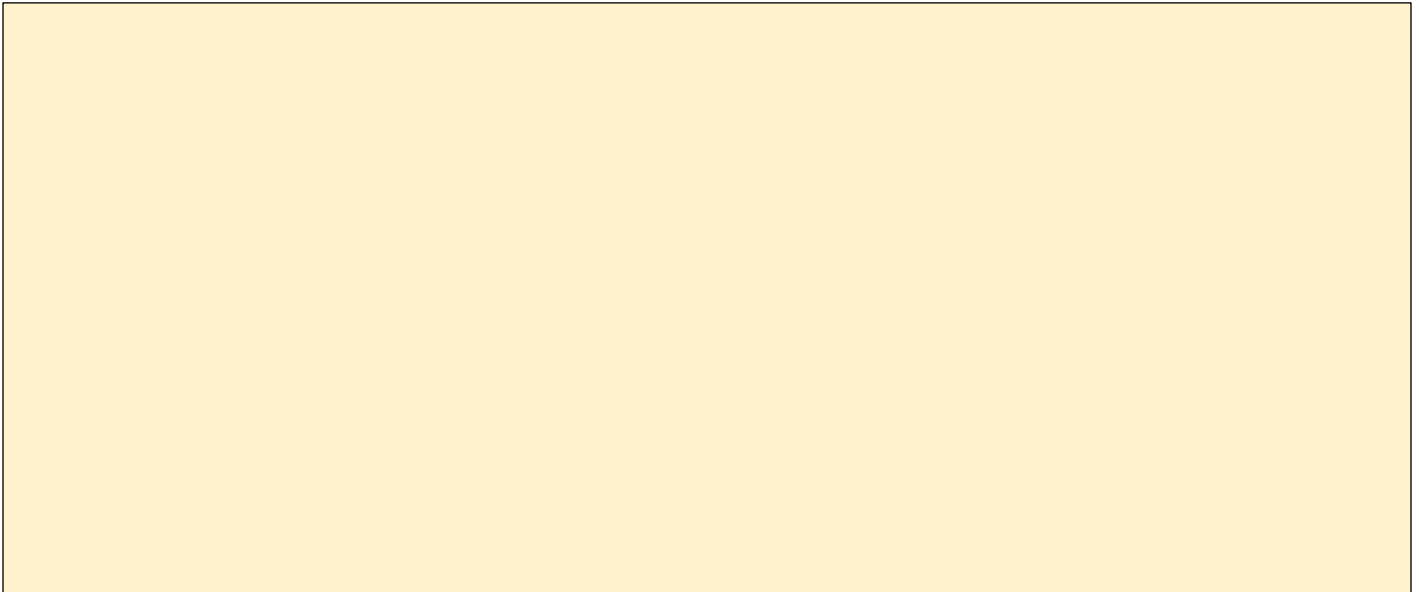
Cleopas and his companion could not stop walking, could not stop listening, could not stop noticing, could not stop letting others know: Jesus has been raised. He sits and eats with us today, beckoning us to draw close, and beckoning us to go forth.

Reflection Questions

Do you think you have received an invitation to share faith with others? What might that say about reaching out to others? How is faith communicated in the daily lives of people today?

Journaling and Integrating

Imagine someone has asked you about your faith. What would you say in a brief way? What would you emphasize? Whom do you imagine yourself talking with—a friend, a family member, a classmate, a stranger? Sketch out a few thoughts.



Group Sharing

At the end of this exercise, participants share any impressions they have from reflecting on how they might share about their faith.

Open Questions

As **ON THE ROAD: EMMAUS** comes to a close, participants may ask any final questions they may have for the group leader or the group to discuss.

Prayer

One of the participants recites this hymn of joy from the First Letter of Peter (1 Peter 1:3-9).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time. In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of [your] faith, the salvation of your souls.

Participants share any spontaneous petitions and prayers of thanksgiving and the session concludes with praying the Our Father.

Hospitality

Snacks and drinks for this session should be extra special as a way to celebrate the conclusion of **ON THE ROAD TOGETHER: EMMAUS**.