



OVERVIEW SECTION

How to Read This Lesson Plan

The **Overview Section** is the foundation of this lesson plan. The questions and activities for the class that you will be teaching on Sunday morning have been based (sometimes loosely) upon what you read in this section. The **Overview Section** is composed of five components (each component is underlined in the lesson plan):

- How to Read This Lesson Plan** (defines all components of the lesson plan)
- Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation** (a reminder of why we do this)
- Scripture(s) for the Session** (a reminder that the scripture is to be read in every class)
- Key Verses & Theology** (background for teachers to ponder)
- Themes to Focus on from the Scripture** (the ideas that the session's lessons are based on)

The actual lesson is found in the second section, **The Sunday Morning Experience Section**. Think of this section as the step-by-step instruction guide to your Sunday morning teaching experience. There are four components to this section (again, each component is underlined in the actual lesson plan):

- Preparation** (including supplies needed)
- Classroom Statement** (a brief explanation of what will be taught/happening in the classroom)
- Step-by-step process of the lesson** (including the scripture to be read)
- Suggested variations for age groups** (Self-explanatory but not always applicable)

We encourage you to read the rest of this **Overview Section** before reading the **Sunday Morning Experience Section**.

Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation

The purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation is, with God's help and in community, to hear and interact with the stories of our faith tradition, to pray, worship and play together, and to equip and support the building of relationships with God and with each other.

Scripture(s) for the Session: Luke 24:13-33

Please READ this aloud in every class you teach. The actual words to the scripture can be found in **The Sunday Morning Experience Section: Step-by-Step process of the lesson**. When reading to the class, please read it from the lesson plan (not an actual Bible) as the wording of the scripture has been modified to help clarify some language issues.

Key Verses & Theology: These are provided to help the teachers think about and build a framework for understanding the story to help in answering some of the questions that the students might raise in class.

13 Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. These first few lines set the stage for the story. The “two of them” being Cleopas and someone else, possibly his wife. Obviously, these are not of the original 12 disciples, but members of another ring of disciples. But why are they leaving Jerusalem? We are not told. But we can infer from their language. When talking to Jesus about Jesus, they call Jesus a “prophet” and say that they had hoped he’d save Israel (v 21). Notice the past tense and the downgrade to prophet from Messiah. There is a palpable sense of “what could’ve been.” These two disciples are acting like they went to a horse race, bet on the wrong horse and are now returning to their everyday lives – whimsically and sadly reminiscing about the treasure they almost had, but just wasn’t to be. It was looking good there for a moment, things were going to be different, but instead, their horse lost, and so things were going to stay the same.

Jesus himself came near and went with them, 16 but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. Two things about this short passage. 1. Even though the two disciples are discouraged and leaving Jerusalem, they are still talking about Jesus. They haven’t fully returned to their old ways of life yet. The stories of Jesus are still strong in their hearts and minds. As they share and talk to each other of these stories, then Jesus becomes real to them. Appears to them. Joins them. Walks with them. Teaches them. 2. However, even though they are disciples, know Jesus, and are actively remembering the stories of Jesus, they do not recognize the Resurrected Jesus. This tells us that even when resurrection is staring us square in the face, there is something about resurrection that we struggle to fully comprehend or see on a physical level.

31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. The thing that causes the two of them to be able to see Jesus is a pattern of life that Jesus lives out in their presence, the pattern of *take, bless, break, give*. Jesus lives out this pattern in three different scripture stories: This story, the feeding of the thousands and the Last Supper. Because these disciples had followed Jesus, had listened and learned what Jesus taught, then they were able to recognize the patterns of Jesus in the moment – they could see that he lived on. That pattern, then, is what opens their eyes. Once they actually *see* the Resurrected Jesus, however, he disappears. Resurrection is not primarily a physical experience for us, even though it was for Jesus. For us, for the disciples, resurrection is the conclusion of our internalizing God’s/Jesus’ way into our lives. The way we internalize God is just like how the disciples internalized: Follow Jesus, talk about the stories, keep Jesus and what he was doing first and foremost in mind. This invites the way of Jesus into our beings and way of life. Jesus’ Way of life continues on, alive and well, when we invite the way of Jesus into our life. This is how the Body of Christ is formed.

33 That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. Once we are aware of how Jesus is alive in us and around us, that changes our focus and our direction. This is shown in a physical sense in the story as the two disciples do a U-turn away from their previous destination, Emmaus, at night no less, and return to where they just left: Jerusalem. Once we are aware of Jesus alive in us, everything changes.

Themes to Focus on from the Scripture: Themes are provided to help teachers understand the teaching of the *session* (not necessarily the class). Sometimes an activity in one class may not match up with any of the themes.

Faith Community – This story starts with the two disciples staying together. Yes, they broke away from the main faith community (the disciples in Jerusalem), and seemed to have given up by returning to their normal lives. But they still stayed with each other as they traveled. The things they had in common were their experiences as disciples. And so, that’s what they talked about as they walked. They talked about Jesus. They probably talked about their own understandings about Jesus and their own experiences with Jesus. This was the bond that held them together and then, as we see in this story, their talking about Jesus also brought in and welcomed the Resurrected Jesus into their midst.

Biblical Literacy – Biblical literacy is a fancy way of saying, “Know the faith stories!” This doesn’t mean you need to know book, chapter and verse. This doesn’t mean you need to memorize bible verses. What this means is that you are familiar and comfortable with the stories, know the characters in the stories by knowing their motivations and mistakes, as well as knowing a general timeline of when they existed. In the Emmaus story, as the three of them walk, Jesus is able to talk to the two disciples using a shared language, the language and stories of the scripture. Jesus speaks to them through the Bible. Being able to see the Resurrected Jesus (as demonstrated in this particular story) is a two-step process, then. It is through the experiences of following Jesus and then talking about those experiences that first invited Jesus into the two disciples’ midst. Then, once Jesus is invited into their midst, their conversation shifts to scripture (starting with Moses, says the story) which eventually leads to the two disciples recognizing Jesus in their midst.

Recognition – Recognition is not automatic. As a child, I had the hardest time finding specific shirts in my closet. I didn’t move the shirts in any particular order (like from left to right). I just flung my hand out and swiped at them. I also was impatient and often ready to give up with a sigh and a “It’s not here” complaint. I’d then attempt to shift responsibility and have someone else look for me, “Mom, where’d you put my shirt?” To be able to recognize and name something that is before you takes work and preparation. To be able to recognize the Resurrected Jesus in our midst, we need to first follow and know Jesus, the man. We need to know the other scripture stories as well. And we need to discuss these stories and experiences with each other. As we do these things, then we’ll see how the Resurrected Jesus is living within us and our faith community.



THE SUNDAY MORNING EXPERIENCE SECTION

Preparation

- Print out this lesson plan and bring it with you on the Sunday Mornings you are teaching
- Arrive at pre-arranged time to join other teachers, shepherds and staff for an opening prayer.
- Supplies Needed: DVD movie (online at www.rfour.org/media.html. Or you can contact me at support@rfour.org about receiving a DVD with all the movies on it for Season 3); TV w/DVD player; 4 to 5 scripts for puppets (see *Storytelling Supply Document S3-S9*); some sort of upright material to for the puppeteers to hide behind and put their puppets above (a large, modified cardboard box works perfectly – if you really want to get into it, get a refrigerator box from an appliance store); camcorder; popsicle puppets (see “How to make popsicle puppets” directly below)
- **How to make popsicle puppets:** Print out the pictures as provided in the *Storytelling Supply Document S3-S9*. Cut them out and either paste or tape them to large craft/popsicle sticks. I often times tape the pictures to dark-colored construction paper to help with support and contrast.

Classroom Statement

This Storytelling class consists of reading the scripture story of the Walk to Emmaus, watching a movie about the story and then putting on a popsicle puppet play about the story.

Step-by-Step Process of Lesson

Shepherd comes in with students

SHEPHERD ASKS “Question of the Day.”

INTRODUCE yourself

Hi, my name is ____ and I want you call me (tell the students how they may address you).

PRAY Short and simple is perfect. For example:

God, thank you for this day and for each other. We need your help. Help us to learn about you this day. Amen.

TELL

- In the story from our last session (not necessarily last week, but last SESSION!), we read about Jesus’ Trial and how he was found guilty (even though he was innocent) and was crucified.

- That story happened on a Friday. The story we're going to read now happens on the Sunday after that Friday.
- In today's story, we find out that even though Jesus died, he didn't stay that way. God resurrected him from the dead!
- That's what Resurrection means: To bring back from the dead.
- There's another important word that gets used in the story that I want to make sure we know what it means. The word "recognize" means to know what or whom you are seeing. For example, "I didn't recognize my dog in the dark hallway until I turned on the light."
- Let's see what happens in the story...

READ Luke 24:13-33 NRSV

13 Now on that same day two of the disciples were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, 16 but the disciples' eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And Jesus said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. 18 Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" 19 Jesus asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. 21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. 22 Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 23 and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him."

25 Then Jesus said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. 28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 29 But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When Jesus was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Jesus; and he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" 33 That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven disciples and their companions gathered together.

ASK (answers are in parentheses)

- Where were the two disciples walking to? (Emmaus)
- Do you remember how far it was from Jerusalem? (about 7 miles)
- As they talked about Jesus, who joined them? (the Resurrected Jesus)
- Did they recognize him? (No)
- What did Jesus talk to the two disciples about? (Moses and the prophets; scripture references to the Messiah)

- When the three of them reached Emmaus, what did the two disciples do? (invited Resurrected Jesus to stay the night)
- What does Jesus do that finally causes the two disciples to recognize him (he takes, blesses, breaks and gives the bread – this was an action he did often and it is mentioned in the feeding of 5000 and the Lord’s Supper stories)
- When Jesus disappears, are the disciples concerned – do they look for him? (Not at all)
- Where do the disciples go after they recognize Resurrected Jesus? (Back to Jerusalem – another 7 mile trip)

TELL

- Last session we talked about the story of Jesus’ Trial and about how it was a sad story.
- And it still is, but this story helps us see how God is greater and more powerful than the Pharisees, the Crowd and the governor, Pilate.
- This story shows us how God is even more powerful than death!
- In all the Resurrection stories, including this one, Jesus only shows himself to the disciples. He doesn’t show himself to the crowd or the Pharisees or Pilate.
- And in this story, even when he DOES show himself, the disciples don’t recognize him right away.
- Instead, they need help to recognize Resurrected Jesus.
- And what helps them recognize Resurrected Jesus are talking about the stories of what Jesus did and then talking about stories in the Old Testament. Then when they ate and prayed together, they recognized that Jesus was with them.
- And the same thing can be true for us too.
- Let’s watch a slideshow/video now that retells the story we just read.

WATCH DVD Video

ASK

- Can you tell me the things the disciples did that helped them to recognize Jesus?

TELL

- We’re going to put on a popsicle puppet play, now, that will very simply retell the story that we’ve just read and watched.
- There are 3 parts: Cleopas, the other disciple and Jesus
- We’ll do a practice run through, where I’ll be the director, helping yall know what to do and when to do it.
- Once we got through the practice run, then we’ll film it.

PRACTICE then RECORD Popsicle Puppet Play

Popsicle Puppet Script

Characters: Cleopas; Other Disciple; Jesus

The Walk to Emmaus

Cleopas: I can't believe what's happened. I can't believe Jesus is gone. Just like that!

Other Disciple: I know

Cleopas: Just last week we were entering Jerusalem and people were shouting with praise and then Jesus cleared out the merchants from the Temple. Things were looking so good!

Other Disciple: I know

Cleopas: And Jesus had been doing such cool things way before that! He was healing, and teaching and walking on water and feeding the thousands. Remember how he'd take the bread, pray over it, break it and give it?

Other Disciple: I do. And I remember when he did the same thing at our last supper with him, just before he was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Cleopas: And then there was that time that he walked on water and Peter tried it too. That was kind of funny when Peter started to sink, though...

Resurrected Jesus: [pops up] Hello there!

Cleopas: Hi

Resurrected Jesus: Mind if I walk with you? I'd like some company. What are you talking about?

Other Disciple: We were talking about Jesus, who was arrested and killed by the Romans even though he didn't do anything.

Resurrected Jesus: That doesn't sound good. How did you know him?

Cleopas: We were actually his disciples. But now that he's dead, we can't follow him anymore.

Resurrected Jesus: I've heard of the guy. It's my understanding that he was the Messiah and that if the authorities killed him, he wasn't going to stay dead.

Cleopas: Yeah, he'd say that from time to time, but what does that mean?

Resurrected Jesus: It means that he lived God's way, and God's way can't be destroyed. God's way is the way Israel was supposed to live. But we didn't do it very well. So our prophets like Isaiah and Elijah and Samuel kept telling us to stop living like all the other countries and to live like God was showing us to live. But we still didn't listen very well, but we listened well enough that a Messiah, someone who would fully live God's way would be born to us. Jesus was this person. Look at what the prophets say a Messiah would do: The blind would see, the lame would walk. God's forgiveness would flow like a mighty river. And the dead would live again. And the Messiah would show us how to live like him, a way to fully live God's way.

Other Disciple: You talk very well. I feel much better than I did earlier. I feel...HOPEFUL! Oh and look! We're home! Please stay with us before you continue your journey tomorrow.

Resurrected Jesus: I will do that. And...is that bread?! Mind if I prepare it for us?

Cleopas: You just took the bread, prayed for it, blessed it and broke it like Jesus always did...

Other Disciple: That's because it's him! It's Jesus! It's Jesus!

Jesus: [Pops down]

Cleopas: I can't believe it! He IS alive! He's resurrected!

Other Disciple: We have to tell the others in Jerusalem!

Cleopas: Grab the bread. We'll eat it on our return trip!

Other Disciple: Jesus is risen! Jesus is risen!

Cleopas: He is risen indeed! Let's run to Jerusalem and tell everyone who knew him!

The End

CLEAN UP