

The Road to Emmaus; God's Presence Changes Everything

Group Leader Instructions

Required Materials:

- Handouts for participants
- Sacred Table - Candle, bible, cross, white cloth, flowers, figurines, etc.
- Candle and lighter
- Holy Water - small bowl/container for each person
- Small wicker basket
- Pieces of paper or note cards (index card size)
- Pencils/pens

Instructions:

- Schedule a small group gathering
- Follow social distancing and masks guidelines
- Open webinar file on computer, pause at first screen (title page)
- Prepare a sacred table or area with suggested items from Materials List
- Read through the guidelines and/or preview the webinar to be familiar with the flow of the reflection
- Follow guidelines to Pause and Restart the webinar
- Have paper and wicker basket ready for the Questions Activity
- Pass out individual containers of Holy Water for the Holy Water Activity

Guidelines:

Slide - Road to Emmaus; God's Presence Changes Everything

Leader Begin the Webinar

Welcome and Prayer

In our Scripture reading today, two friends are walking together. Questions and concerns fill their heads. Jesus has been crucified. They have lost hope. As they walk side by side, a third person shows up. They do not recognize this person as Jesus. As they walk Jesus explains scripture to them, revealing who he is, but they do not understand and still do not see that it is Christ. Grief and current events distract them from hearing and seeing Jesus with them.

God comes to us, during our mundane tasks, within our ordinary days, while we are distracted and calls us by name to unexpected and extraordinary opportunities to join God in the work of the Vineyard. We invite you to light a candle to remind us of God's presence with us, here amidst the ordinary, despite our distraction.

Slide - Candles

Leader Pause Webinar

Leader - Light the candle and place it on the sacred table

Leader Restart Webinar

Scripture - Gospel of Luke (24:13-35)

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

Reflection

Scripture - Gospel of Luke

And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. 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?" He asked them, "What things?"

Reflection

Leader Pause Webinar

Slide - Discussion Questions:

Does God still ask us "what things?"

If we believe that God already knows all that has happened, what difference does it make to enter into conversation with God about it?

How has the pandemic changed your experience and image of God?

Leader Restart Webinar

Scripture - Gospel of Luke:

They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. 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. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 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. 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.”

Reflection

Leader Pause Webinar

Slide - Discussion Questions:

Whether it was during the pandemic or at another time in your life have you ever lost hope and are you comfortable sharing that experience with the group?

In your experience of losing hope was it caused by a specific incident or was it so gradual and subtle that you didn't realize your hope was fading?

Has your hope been restored?

Leader Restart Webinar

Scripture - Gospel of Luke

Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all of the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all of the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on.

Reflection

Leader Pause Webinar

Slide - Discussion Questions:

Why do you think that the disciples were not able to recognize Jesus?

Leader Restart Webinar

Scripture - Gospel of Luke

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. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. 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?"

Reflection

Leader Pause Webinar

Slide - Discussion Questions:

How have you experienced "holy ground" during this time of the pandemic?

Looking back on this past year, has your "heart burned" because you realized that God had been there with you every step of the way?

What does it feel like to know that Jesus is walking with you right now?

Leader Restart Webinar

The conclusion of the reading of the Gospel of Luke:

That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Reflection

Slide - Journaling and Reflection Time

Leader Pause Webinar

Leader: Allow time for quiet reflection

Leader Restart Webinar

Questions Activity (wicker basket)

Slide - Sacred Table

Leader Pause Webinar

Leader: Share this prayer when placing basket of questions on the Sacred Table:

“Remember that God brings hope, brings faith, when answers, when words, are not enough. We bring our questions to you God; give us hope. Amen”

Leader Restart Webinar

Holy Water Activity (individual containers)

Slide - Holy Water

Leader Pause Webinar

Leader: Provide a few moments for silent prayer and invite all to bless themselves with the Holy Water by tracing the cross on their forehead, saying this prayer:

“Lord stay with me, as I return to ministry in your vineyard.”

Leader Restart Webinar

Conclusion

Quote by Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter; Fratelli Tutti:

“I invite everyone to renewed hope, for hope speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, independently of our circumstances and historical conditioning. Hope speaks to us of a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfillment, a desire to achieve great things, things that fill our heart and lift our spirit to lofty realities like truth, goodness and beauty, justice and love. Hope is bold; it can look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile. Let us continue, then, to advance along the paths of hope.”

Slide - Photo credits

Leader Stop webinar