

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

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SCRIPTURE PASSAGE/ LECTIONARY WEEK:	Luke 24:13-35
SOCIAL PRINCIPLES/ BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS REFERENCES:	¶162 The Social Community “Other Social Issues” F and L.
OBJECTIVE:	Students will explore how God’s living hope sustains faith through challenges and inspires them to take action for justice, compassion, and support for those facing hardship.
SUPPLIES NEEDED:	Large Paper or Whiteboard, pencil/pens/markers, Bible Mapping Handout, copies of 2020/2024 Social Principles: The Social Community, ¶162 “Other Social Issues” F and L, attached student handout.

LESSON PLAN STRUCTURE (1 HOUR)

CENTERING MOMENT (5 MINUTES)

Say: Welcome, everyone. I’m really glad you’re here today. Take a moment to find a comfortable place to sit, somewhere you can listen, think, and be yourself. Once you are settled, take a deep breath in... and out.

(Pause)

Say: Before we jump into our lesson, we are going to start by being honest and about something we all experience: feeling sad or feeling bad.

Say: On this paper/board, I’d like us to name things that can make people feel sad, disappointed, or left out. There are no wrong answers, and you only need to share what you feel comfortable sharing. I’ll start us off with a few examples just to get us thinking.

- When someone else wins an award or a game.
- Being left out of a group chat.
- Missing someone in your family or a friend.

NOTES

The group may have a hard time coming up with answers that seem deeper than surface level. That is okay at this stage.

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- Doing poorly on a test.
- Having their feelings hurt by a friend or family member.

Say: What are some other things that might make someone feel sad or feel bad?

(As youth share, write their responses on the board/paper. Affirm contributions with brief responses like: 'Thank you for sharing.' 'That's real.' 'A lot of people can relate to that.')

Say: Looking at this list, we can see that everyone carries something big or small that affects how they feel. Today, we are going to spend some time talking about what we do with these feelings, and how God meets us in them.

SCRIPTURE STUDY (25 MIN.)

Say: Today we are going to read a resurrection story that's a little quieter and slower, but deeply meaningful. It's the story of Jesus walking with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Listen for confusion, emotion, and surprise as we hear this story."

(Leader or volunteers read Luke 24:13-35 aloud. Brief pause after reading.)

Say: Now we are going to break into small groups of two or three. I'm giving each group, or each person, a Bible Mapping Handout (attached handout.) This handout will help you slow down and really explore what's happening in the story. As you work, talk together and write down your responses. There are no perfect answers, we are practicing noticing, wondering, and making connections."

Say: As you work through your handout, discuss these questions together.

- When does this story take place in Luke's Gospel? Is it before or after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection?
- According to Luke's Gospel, had Jesus appeared to anyone else before this story? (Hint: You may want to look back at Luke 24:1-12).
- Who is in this story? (Two disciples-Cleopas and another unnamed follower of Jesus; Jesus himself.)

NOTES

For the small group time, students can use the attached Bible Mapping Handout to help them identify key elements of the Bible story.

This scripture connects with the Lectionary text for this Sunday which is the Third Sunday after Easter. This is the second story of Jesus appearing to his followers the lectionary addresses.

The words "on the same day" help us understand that this event takes place on the same day that the women first went to the tomb looking for Jesus. This takes place on "the first day of the week" according to earlier verses in Luke 24.

Historical evidence suggests that the walk to Emmaus may have been anywhere between 60 stadia or 160 stadia. This means the disciples could have been planning to walk anywhere between 7 miles or 20 miles!

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- What is significant about what these two followers had lived through over the weekend as they walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus?
- What emotions do you think they were experiencing as they walked and talked, both with each other and with Jesus?
- What does Jesus share with the disciples along the way?
- How does Jesus finally reveal who he is?
- How do the disciples respond once they realize they have encountered the risen Jesus?

Say: You have about 10-15 minutes. Choose one person in your group who can share a few insights when we come back together.

(Pause for activity)

Say: Let's come back as one group. I'd love to hear some of what you noticed.

(Invite groups to share highlights rather than every answer.)

Prompt Questions for groups:

- What feelings or emotions did your group name for the disciples?
- What stood out to you about how Jesus showed up in this story?
- What surprised you?

Say: Listening to all of you, what themes do we hear across the groups?

(Possible responses:

- Grief and disappointment
- Confusion and doubt
- Hope mixed with fear
- Jesus walking with people even when they don't recognize him
- Understanding coming through relationship and shared meals)

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Say: This story reminds us that the risen Jesus often meets people in the middle of their confusion, on ordinary roads, during honest conversations. Sometimes we don't recognize Jesus right away, but that doesn't mean that Jesus isn't present.

Say: As we continue, hold onto this idea: Jesus walks with us in our questions, our disappointment, and our searching and reveals himself in ways we don't always expect.

GROUP ACTIVITY (25 MIN.)

Say: Let's think again about the disciples on the road to Emmaus and what they had just lived through. After everything that happened that weekend, what emotions do you think they were feeling?

(Allow responses, affirm feelings such as grief, fear, confusion, disappointment, anger, hopelessness.)

Say: Why do you think these followers were feeling that way after Jesus' death?

(Invite responses)

Say: Let's think about the historical context. The followers of Jesus didn't live in a safe or powerful position in society. They were part of a movement that challenged the status quo. They were likely persecuted and mistreated both by the Roman government, which saw Jesus as a political threat, and by their own Jewish religious leaders, who viewed the movement as dangerous or heretical. So, as they walked toward Emmaus, they weren't just grieving a friend they lost, they were walking through fear, uncertainty, and vulnerability.

Say: This brings us to an important word we are going to talk about today: marginalized. Does anyone want to take a guess what does it mean to be marginalized?

(Pause for responses. Offer clarification if needed.)

Say: To be marginalized means to be pushed to the edges of society: ignored, excluded, or treated as less important or less valuable.

NOTES

Marginalization is the treatment of a person, group, or concept as insignificant or peripheral.

Marginalized groups are those that experience systemic disadvantage, exclusion, or discrimination based on characteristics like race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, or religion. Examples of these groups include racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, and those living in poverty.

It may be appropriate to remind the group that other marginalized populations are included within our Social Principles. These are just two examples we are focusing our attention on today.

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Ask: What are some examples of marginalized communities that you've seen or heard about today?

(Pause for responses.)

Ask: How have you witnessed these groups being treated by others in society?

(Name patterns that emerge exclusion, stereotyping, violence, lack of access, silence.)

Say: As followers of Jesus, we believe we are called to walk alongside people who have experienced marginalization just like Jesus walked with the disciples on the road. The United Methodist Church speaks directly to this calling in our Social Principles, which help guide how we live out our faith in the world.

Say: I'm going to ask you to read the following excerpts from Paragraph 162, Other Social Issues, sections F and L. These sections speak specifically to Gender, Equality, and Diversity and Racism, Ethnocentrism, and Tribalism.

(Pause allow students to read.)

Discussion Questions:

- According to our Social Principles, how are we called to care for marginalized populations?
- How did Jesus demonstrate care for the disciples on the Emmaus Road? (He joined them, listened, asked questions, stayed with them, and helped them understand their experience.)
- How did Jesus walking alongside the disciples and listening to their story help them recognize his presence?
- What can we do better to truly listen to the needs of people who are mistreated by sexism and racism in our communities?
- Does our church model what it looks like to live out the Social Principles?

(Encourage honesty without shaming.)

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Introduction to discussion on marginalized communities.

- What does it mean to be marginalized?
- What are some examples of marginalized communities that you have seen or heard about?
- How have you witnessed these groups being treated by other people in society?

Say: The story of Emmaus reminds us that Jesus shows up by walking with people, especially those who feel hurt, afraid, or pushed aside. When we listen, when we walk alongside others, and when we act with compassion and courage, we help make Christ visible in the world. As the church, we are called not just to believe these values, but to live them, together.

CLOSING MOMENT (5 MIN.)

Say: As we get ready to close today, I want to name something important. We've talked about big, meaningful topics, things that don't always have quick or easy answers. It's okay if you are still thinking, wondering, or even feeling unsettled. That often means something important is happening. If you have more questions, please know you are not on your own. You can talk with me, another leader, or a trusted adult. I can also help connect you with resources, books, articles, or people, if you want to keep learning or reflecting.

Say: To close our time together, I'd like to invite one of you to offer a prayer. If no one feels ready, I'm happy to pray for us.

Optional Prayer:

Lord, let us walk like Jesus alongside those who are suffering and who have been hurt by our society. Let us listen and hear their stories so that we might demonstrate to them the presence of Jesus Christ through us. Help us to better know an understand our own church and our community so that we can share the inclusive grace that comes through You. Amen.