We recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread.

- Two disciples of Jesus meet the risen Jesus on the road, but recognize him only when he breaks bread with them.
- The gospel points to gathering around a table for fellowship as one way in which we experience the risen Lord. Remember that the young children gathered around the table in a faith formation group offer and receive the risen Jesus to one another.
- Today’s session invites young children to explore sharing bread with Jesus and one another.

Question of the Week
When have you recognized Jesus while eating with others?
Getting Started (5-15 minutes)

Children handle materials used in the celebration of the Eucharist.

Begin by showing children the photographs of bread, attached to this document. For each photograph ask:

◆ What bread do you see in this picture?
◆ Have you seen this kind of bread yourself? Where? When?
◆ Do you eat bread in a sandwich? Do you eat bread as toast? When do you like to eat bread?

Invite children to handle a paten or communion plate. If your church is comfortable with this idea, place unconsecrated hosts or communion bread on the paten or plate. If these materials aren’t available to you, adapt the questions below by saying, “How do people eat bread in church?”

Ask:

◆ Where have you seen these (touch the paten or plate and bread) before?
◆ Where do people eat this bread? When? (Do not rush to the next question. Allow plenty of time for the children to share their stories about the Eucharist.)
◆ What do we call the time people eat bread together in church? (Different families may have different names for the Eucharist. Accept the children’s answers and, if necessary, add that we can call that special time the Eucharist.)
◆ When people eat this bread together, who is with us? (The children will probably name family and friends. If necessary, end by saying, “And Jesus is with us, too.”)

Say:

◆ The Eucharist is a special time when Jesus shares bread and friendship with his friends.
◆ Today I want to tell you about another time when Jesus shared bread with his friends.

Gospel Story (5-10 minutes)

Story: Two on a Road, Three on a Road

Story Focus: Use the paten and hosts from the Getting Started activity above, or simply use an ordinary plate with ordinary bread. You can break the bread at the appropriate moment in today’s story.

Two travelers walked to Emmaus one day. A third traveler met them on the way. “We’re friends of Jesus,” the two men said. “We’ve heard he’s risen from the dead.”

The third one smiled and said, “It’s true!” God said that’s what Jesus would do.” They talked all the way to Emmaus town. They reached it as the sun went down.

“Eat with us,” the two men said.
So the third man sat and broke some bread.
The two men couldn’t believe their eyes!
“It’s Jesus!” they said. “He’s really alive!”

After the Story:

Encourage children to respond with the Easter message: “Alleluia! Jesus (or Christ) is risen!”

Game (5-15 minutes)

Jesus is Walking With Us

Children play an active game based on today’s story. Ask one child to be Jesus. Ask Jesus to sit as the other children walk in pairs. (As the children walk, play appropriate music. We suggest Johnson’s “My Sisters and Brothers” with its wonderful refrain: “If we walk together, little children, we won’t ever have to worry.”)

Ask the other children to walk in twos around as they say, “Where’s Jesus?” At your signal, Jesus stands and begins walking, too. Say aloud, “Jesus is with us!”

All the children then scurry to line up behind Jesus as quickly as possible. The children follow Jesus as he or she leads them once around the room. Choose a new Jesus to continue play.

Praying Together (5 minutes)

Light the Easter candle made and decorated in the session for the 2nd Sunday of Easter. Say:

◆ Jesus was with his friends in Emmaus, when he broke the bread.
◆ Jesus is with us here, today.
◆ What would you like to say to Jesus today? (Allow each child a chance to speak freely to Jesus.)

Note: If you use At Home with the Good News, distribute this week’s paper to the children before they leave, or e-mail it to their parents after the session.
Discover the Good News (5-10 minutes)
In today’s Discover the Good News you’ll find an illustrated version of today’s gospel story. You will also find pictures of people sharing bread in different ways. Use these pictures as story starters with the children. Can they find the bread in each picture? What are the people doing with the bread?

Singing Together (5-10 minutes)
From Singing the Good News, sing together:
◆ “Rejoice! Jesus Lives!” (p. 41 of the songbook)
◆ “Break Bread” (p. 45 of the songbook)

Note: To access both the songbook and its attached MP3 files, open your Spring-A Seasonal Resources folder, then click on Singing the Good News.

Play Center (10-15 minutes)
Easter
Activity Soundtrack: Play Johnson’s “My Sisters and Brothers,” a joyful affirmation of our walk with Jesus. (Open your Spring-A Seasonal Resources folder, then click on Companion Music for options on obtaining this music.)

As in the session for the 2nd Sunday of Easter, we recommend that you invite children to explore materials used in our celebration of Easter. Some churches now use an Easter garden as a counterpart to the Nativity crèche. This set of play materials consists of a model tomb, a figure of Jesus, an angel and several of Jesus’ followers. You can find directions for making an Easter Garden scene attached to this document. You’ll find directions for making Easter butterflies in the session for Passion (Palm) Sunday on page 2.

A center gives children the chance to really play with materials that may not be fully available to them at home or church. Place one or more baskets, colorful plastic eggs and butterflies in a corner of the room, perhaps arranging them on a brightly colored cloth. If you use an Easter garden, make the garden the focal point of the center. Include the white pillar candle used in today’s Praying Together activity in this center. You can also add the bread and plate used in today’s story. Invite children to explore the free-play materials by twos and threes throughout today’s session.

Play Center (10-20 minutes)
Bread Clay
As an addition or alternative to the Easter Play Center, you can invite children to explore bread clay. Remind the children that Jesus and his friends shared bread. Tell the children that bread is made from soft dough, like the dough they can make together in this center.

Help children make the bread clay by mixing together the 2 cups flour, 1 cup salt and about 1 cup water. Use enough water to make clay that feels like bread dough. Knead well.

Invite children to take turns kneading the dough. An easy way to accomplish this is to help children form a circle around the table. Children walk around the table, stopping to let each child give the dough a push. Children love this extra opportunity to move around the room as they work.

Ask children to knead the dough until it's smooth. You can now let three or four children at a time take turns playing with the bread clay as the other children begin work on the art project below.

If an adult or teenage helper stays at this center, he or she should enter into the children’s activities and conversation about the materials, but can also pause from time to time to repeat these lines from today's story:
◆ “Eat with us,” the two men said.
◆ So the third man sat and broke some bread.
Art/Craft (10-15 minutes)

Pictures with Jesus

Children add drawings of themselves to a picture of Jesus and bread.

In the center of the poster board, use simple lines (see below) to draw a picture of Jesus with broken bread. If you are uncomfortable with your level of drawing skills, ask for a volunteer from your teen group or high school religious education program to draw instead.

Most young children respond readily to an invitation to draw pictures of themselves. This activity allows them to combine those self-portraits into a group poster. Be aware that a preschooler’s self-portrait may consist of no more than a lopsided circle with two lines. That is a fine response to today’s challenge!

In the session show the picture to the children. Briefly discuss:

- Who broke bread at Emmaus? (Jesus)
- When does Jesus give us bread? (the Eucharist)

Give each child felt pens or crayons and a sheet of paper. Ask the children to draw pictures of themselves to add to the poster. Children can cut away extra paper from their finished self-portraits. Ask the children to glue their pictures to the poster.

Young Children and the Gospel

On the road to Emmaus after Jesus’ resurrection, two disciples meet him without recognizing him. Only when they see him break bread do they know who he is. This post-resurrection story points to our experience of Jesus’ presence in the Eucharist.

We explore both this story and stories about the Eucharist in today’s session. In the gospel account, the story ends as Jesus disappears from the disciples’ sight. This dramatic detail is not included in today’s story, so that the focus of the story will be the focus of the gospel itself: the revelation of the presence of Jesus through the breaking of bread.

Where You’ll Find Everything Else

- Attached to this Session Plan you will find:
  - Backgrounds and reflections for today’s readings, titled More about Today’s Scriptures.
  - A printable version of today’s Gospel Story: Two on a Road, Three on a Road, to use in the session or to send home with—or e-mail to—children and their parents.
  - An alternative Story-Review Game: Going to Emmaus.
  - Two alternate Bread Craft activity ideas to compliment today’s Bread Play Center experience.
  - A family paper, At Home with the Good News, to print and distribute or to e-mail to families for use at home.
- Open your Spring-A Seasonal Resources folder, then click on Seasonal Articles to find:
  - Information on Spring-A’s Models of the Faith.
  - An article for catechists examining Using Music and Musical Activities in faith-formation.
  - The Introduction for Preschool/Kindergarten for Living the Good News.
More about Today’s Scriptures

Today’s readings invite us into fellowship with the resurrected Christ and with each other. In Acts, Peter attests to the resurrection of Jesus Christ as an act of God, an act that forms the basis for Christian community. 1 Peter further explores the redemptive work of Jesus, who ransoms us from emptiness and exile. Finally, in today’s gospel, the risen Jesus teaches two disciples from the scriptures and shares a meal with them, establishing a pattern we still follow in our weekly liturgy.

Acts 2:14, 22-33

The book of the Acts recounts the early growth of the Church. One of the major features of Acts is Luke’s use of speeches by the principal figures, providing reflection on and analysis of events. Today’s reading is taken from the first of these discourses, in which Peter addresses the crowd on the Day of Pentecost.

The account stresses the providence of God in the disposition of these events. In the paradoxical fate of the Messiah, human freedom and divine necessity are intertwined. Humanity’s act of rejection is reversed by God’s act of affirmation. Then Peter uses citations from the Old Testament to show that Jesus is the Messiah. Of the events foretold in the scripture, the apostles themselves were eyewitnesses.

1 Peter 1:17-21

This reading exhorts believers to a standard of life that reflects what God has done for them. The appropriate response to God’s greatness and goodness is behavior pleasing to God.

The image of ransoming, or redemption, is taken from the Old Testament where it has both a secular and a theological use. In Hebrew society an enslaved person or alienated land was bought back by the next-of-kin, and the first-born was bought back by the family.

In the New Testament, the metaphor of the legal transaction of redemption is of great significance. Jesus applies the term to his death, and Paul also speaks of the price of Jesus’ blood. The term redemption is used most often, however, in the general sense of paying the price.


The two disciples on the way to Emmaus share the popular view of Jesus as a prophet and point to the hope that Jesus was in fact the expected prophet-like-Moses. Comprehension begins with the interpretation of the scriptures, which pointed toward the suffering and glory of the Messiah. The power of the word of God prepared them to receive the broken bread in full recognition of Jesus.

The postresurrection table fellowship with Jesus links the feeding during his early ministry and the pledge at the Last Supper with the eucharistic experiences of the early Church. Although Jesus’ physical presence is withdrawn, his self-revelation in scripture and his manifestation in the Eucharist remain. The pattern of word and sacrament in the story becomes that of the Christian liturgy and life.

Reflection

Two phrases seem pivotal to today’s gospel. The first, “But we had hoped…” (Luke 24:21) sums up the huge disappointment of the disciples. They do not want to be interrupted by a stranger at a time of intense grief. How ironic that we too, preoccupied with what seem like major concerns, don’t want intrusions, even if Jesus is the unsuspected intruder.

Often we get our hopes up, then when they come crashing down, we grow a bit more cynical, a bit less likely to hope again. To Cleopas and companion, the cross meant disaster. So we can’t see past what seems like failure or destruction to the underlying blessing. We don’t suspect that Christ lies hidden in the face of the stranger. The last thing we want is venturing into insecurity or risk. Christianity is fine as long as it’s safe and complacent, not requiring change.

The second phrase, “Abide with us…” (v. 29), shifts that whole picture. We see a social event differently if the group is composed of strangers or of people we love. This phrase has inspired poignant hymns and expresses the deep hope of Christians: with Christ beside us, we can do anything.
The Scriptures and the Catechism

Today we recall the different forms of the risen Christ’s presence among us (CCC, #1373). He is present in the proclamation of the word, as is evident in the speech of Peter. He is also present in our prayer, in particular our eucharistic celebration (CCC, #1345–55), and he is present in the mysterious strangers who accompany us on our daily journey (CCC, #946–62).

Using Fiber Arts To Bring Different Age Groups Together

by Linda Ashe-Ford

The arts provide a way to bring children, teens and adults together to celebrate the glory of the Lord. Here are two more activities that you can use in your sessions.

Parish Banner

Spring is a wonderful time to celebrate the coming together of the Body of Christ by making a Parish Banner. Use the story of Jesus choosing four fishermen in Matthew 4:18-22 to talk about how we are the fish that Jesus called the disciples to gather.

Start by using a large, tabbed curtain panel for the banner base. Precut simple fish shapes, then ask everyone to decorate their own fish by using materials you have gathered in advance, for example, fabric pens, glitter glue, buttons, trim, beads and other decorations that can be easily glued or sewed onto the fish.

Ask some of your seasoned craft people to help attach the fish to the banner by using a simple running stitch. The bulk of this project can be completed in an afternoon or evening, with the finishing touches done by volunteers in a few hours. Your banner can be ready to hang a few days later.

This same idea can also be used to make a “Let Your Light Shine” banner: first read Matthew 5:14-16 to remind everyone to let their light shine, then instead of making fish to decorate, have everyone decorate candle shapes for the banner.

Prayer Blanket or Prayer Shawl

To celebrate the gifts of God for the people of God, look for activities that bring all ages together to help someone else. Ask the knitters in your church to help with a Prayer Blanket or Prayer Shawl.

Seasoned knitters can teach new and less experienced knitters of all ages to knit strips that can be joined together to make blankets, scarves or wraps. Younger children or those who don’t wish to knit can decorate cards containing the prayer to include with the blankets and shawls. Ask older children and teens to write prayers to go on the cards.

Quilts

Invite individuals, groups or families in the parish to make up individual quilt squares in advance. At the gathering, give each participant a square to decorate using fabric markers or paint. Invite the group to decide on the design for the quilt(s). Enlist the help of quilters to assemble and finish the quilts. If you wish, your finished projects might be displayed, then donated to a homeless shelter, a hospital or the sick and needy.

Altar Cloths

Another project that can involve all age levels is the making of an Altar Cloth. First have older children or teens research what an altar cloth is and how it is used. Ask a member of the altar guild to speak to all age levels about how they choose and care for the altar cloths used in your church. Have older children and teens brainstorm ideas for the cloth you wish to make.

Using a white cotton tablecloth as a base, draw pictures based on the chosen theme, using fabric markers. One altar cloth that we made was used for a special youth service that our teen group planned. We also made an altar cloth that represented everyone by drawing simple body shapes on a white tablecloth, then asking everyone to finish the bodies by drawing themselves. We use this one for First Communion.

Planning activities to include different age levels is an important way to gather people in fellowship. It can help build a strong faith community where children and adults learn that each has gifts from God to share.