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TABLE TALKS

CONVERSATION GUIDE

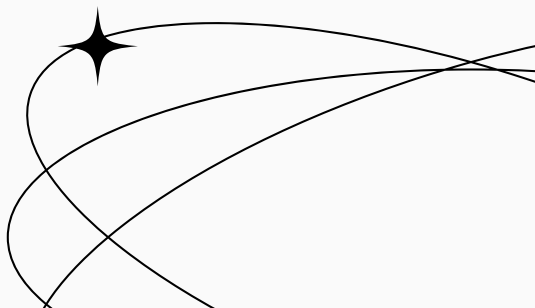
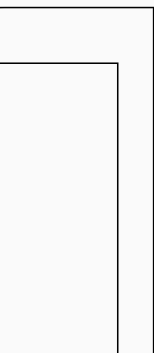


6 Weeks - 6 Jesus Stories - 6 Conversations

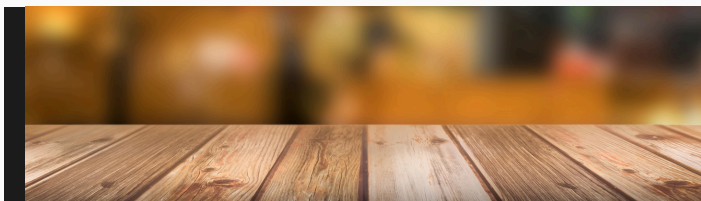


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INTRODUCTION



Several times in the earliest retellings of the story of Jesus we find him sitting at tables . . . often with food on the table. There is something about sharing at a table together that breaks down barriers between people or opens the door for good conversation. Whether enjoying a drink, a snack, or a full meal, having something on the table helps people connect even more!

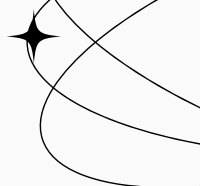
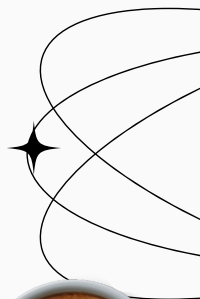
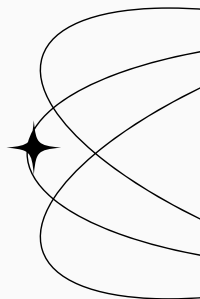
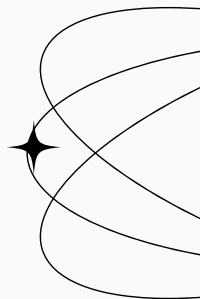
Over the next six weeks, you are invited to practice sharing a table. Ideally, you'll work with your group to put something on the table. It may be as simple as a host preparing beverages. You may take turns bringing snacks. You might even try out a potluck meal or two (or six!).

In addition to sharing the table, we invite you to share your lives. Listen to each other's stories and perspectives. Ask questions. Work to create space where these Jesus stories and each other's curiosity and thoughts about them can shape you in healthy ways! And be open to beginning to care for each other as you spend this time together for six weeks.

To help facilitate this, each week is laid out as follows:

- Serving the Drinks - a starter question to get you sharing
- Setting the Table - reading scripture together
- Digging In - discussion about scripture
- Dessert - a group reimagination of the story in a contemporary setting
- The Doggy Bag - questions to think about before prayer and as you head home
- Clean-up - time for prayer (and literal time to clean up!)

More important than following the format perfectly is creating space where each of you can belong together on this journey of learning and growing in the way of Jesus!



1. TABLE TALK WITH SINNERS

Serving the Drinks:

What is the most significant act of generosity you have witnessed (or received)?

Setting the Table:

Those who are open to reading, take turns reading the following scripture aloud.

Luke 5:27-32

27 Later, as Jesus left the town, he saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. 28 So Levi got up, left everything, and followed him.

29 Later, Levi held a banquet in his home with Jesus as the guest of honour. Many of Levi's fellow tax collectors and other guests also ate with them. 30 But the Pharisees and their teachers of religious law complained bitterly to Jesus' disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with such scum?"

31 Jesus answered them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. 32 I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent."

Luke 7:36-50

36 One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat. 37 When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. 38 Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them.

39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She's a sinner!"

40 Then Jesus answered his thoughts. "Simon," he said to the Pharisee, "I have something to say to you."

"Go ahead, Teacher," Simon replied.

41 Then Jesus told him this story: "A man loaned money to two people—500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other. 42 But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?"

43 Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt."

"That's right," Jesus said. 44 Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn't offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You didn't greet me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume.

47 "I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love." 48 Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."

49 The men at the table said among themselves, "Who is this man, that he goes around forgiving sins?"

50 And Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Digging In:

- *Who do you relate to in these stories? How?*
- *Why are the Pharisees so upset about who Jesus welcomes at the table?*
- *What is Jesus teaching the various people in these stories through his actions? (Disciples? Tax collectors? Pharisees? The woman?)*
- *How do you feel about Jesus calling people "sick" in the first story? Who do you think Jesus is talking about when he uses that term?*

Dessert – A Group Reimagination:

Together, consider the second story. Try to reimagine it in today's context. Who might be the characters? What might be the context? How might the story go?

Doggy Bag

(a minute of silence & things to think about as you go):

- *Did trying to tell the story for today's world expose any biases or prejudices you're holding on to?*
- *Are there any sins, debts, or sicknesses you're carrying that you need to bring to Jesus in faith for forgiveness and healing?*
- *Where has God met you with grace, mercy, and love in the past? Remind yourself of God's faithfulness and love as you prepare to pray together.*

Clean-up:

- *Take a minute to share any praises or prayer requests with the group that you are comfortable sharing. Use the space below for notes to remember what's shared.*

- *Close in prayer for each other. You can take turns praying or have one or two people pray on your behalf.*

Benediction

*The creator God enfleshed comes to you with love,
prepared to meet with you at the measure of your faith.*

Sinner, saint, or scandalous – all are welcome.

*Jesus wants to sit with you at your table
to serve you a feast of mercy, grace, and love.*

*May you lay down any judgements and pride you've been carrying in
order to taste of God's goodness.*

*May the chaos and confusion that comes because Jesus welcomes
everyone prompt you to laugh and smile*

Because you are included in that welcome!

*And may this truth open your heart to others
who may be hard for you to welcome.*

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

2. TABLE TALK WHEN THERE'S WORK TO BE DONE

Serving the Drinks:

Who was your favourite teacher - at any age level? What made them special to you?

Setting the Table:

Those who are open to reading, take turns reading the following scripture aloud.

Luke 10:38-42

38 As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. 39 Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. 40 But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

41 But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! 42 There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

Digging In:

- *Who do you relate to in this story? How?*
- *Why is it so significant that Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet as a disciple?*
- *What is Jesus teaching the various people in this story through his actions? (Mary? Jesus' disciples? Martha?)*
- *Is Jesus suggesting that we never need to take care of the details like what we're going to eat and who will prepare it? If so...how should we live? If not...what is being suggested about how we should live?*

Dessert – A Group Reimagination:

Together, consider the story. Try to reimagine it in today's context. Who might be the characters? What might be the context? How might the story go?

Doggy Bag

(a minute of silence & things to think about as you go):

- *Did trying to tell the story for today's world expose any habits, tendencies, or ways of thinking that God might be inviting you to pay attention to or address?*
- *Do you have a regular time when you just sit at Jesus' feet – even for a moment?*
- *Do you have any tension, conflict, or frustration with someone else where you wish Jesus would just intervene and "fix" the other person? What might Jesus be saying to you or for you in this situation?*

Clean-up:

- *Take a minute to share any praises or prayer requests with the group that you are comfortable sharing. Use the space below for notes to remember what's shared.*

- *Close in prayer for each other. You can take turns praying or have one or two people pray on your behalf.*

Benediction

Yes. God calls each of us to various forms of action.

Serve one another. Bear one another's burdens.

Love.

But God's love for you is not predicated on what you do.

You are a human being. Not a human doing.

*As you go through the week to come, may you find rest in the truth
That God loves you before you lift a finger – before success or failure.*

*And God will love you long after you can
achieve, accomplish, or acquire.*

Hear the Spirit of Christ speak these words over you:

"You are my child, whom I love. In you I am well pleased."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

3. TABLE TALK ABOUT THE HEAD OF THE TABLE

Serving the Drinks:

Who is the most famous person you've ever met? What was that exchange like?

Setting the Table:

Those who are open to reading, take turns reading the following scripture aloud.

LLuke 14:1-24

One Sabbath day Jesus went to eat dinner in the home of a leader of the Pharisees, and the people were watching him closely. 2 There was a man there whose arms and legs were swollen. 3 Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in religious law, "Is it permitted in the law to heal people on the Sabbath day, or not?" 4 When they refused to answer, Jesus touched the sick man and healed him and sent him away. 5 Then he turned to them and said, "Which of you doesn't work on the Sabbath? If your son or your cow falls into a pit, don't you rush to get him out?" 6 Again they could not answer.

7 When Jesus noticed that all who had come to the dinner were trying to sit in the seats of honour near the head of the table, he gave them this advice: 8 "When you are invited to a wedding feast, don't sit in the seat of honour. What if someone who is more distinguished than you has also been invited? 9 The host will come and say, 'Give this person your seat.' Then you will be embarrassed, and you will have to take whatever seat is left at the foot of the table!

10 "Instead, take the lowest place at the foot of the table. Then when your host sees you, he will come and say, 'Friend, we have a better place for you!' Then you will be honoured in front of all the other guests. 11 For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

12 Then he turned to his host. "When you put on a luncheon or a banquet," he said, "don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbours. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. 13 Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. 14 Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you."

15 Hearing this, a man sitting at the table with Jesus exclaimed, "What a blessing it will be to attend a banquet in the Kingdom of God!"

16 Jesus replied with this story: "A man prepared a great feast and sent out many invitations. 17 When the banquet was ready, he sent his servant to tell the guests, 'Come, the banquet is ready.' 18 But they all began making excuses. One said, 'I have just bought a field and must inspect it. Please excuse me.' 19 Another said, 'I have just bought five pairs of oxen, and I want to try them out. Please excuse me.' 20 Another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

21 "The servant returned and told his master what they had said. His master was furious and said, 'Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' 22 After the servant had done this, he reported, 'There is still room for more.' 23 So his master said, 'Go out into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full. 24 For none of those I first invited will get even the smallest taste of my banquet.'"

Digging In:

- *Who do you relate to in this story? How?*
- *What is Jesus teaching the various people in this story? (The Pharisees/religious leaders? Jesus' disciples? Others who aren't in the important seats?)*
- *Think about what you know of Jesus' life. How did he embody the lessons he is communicating?*
- *Is Jesus suggesting that we should use humility (putting ourselves at the end of the table) as a ploy or tool to get to the places of importance? If so, what are the implications of that? If not, what do you think he is suggesting?*
- *What picture does this give of the kingdom of God? Describe it in your words.*

Dessert - A Group Reimagination:

Together, consider the story. Try to reimagine it in today's context. Who might be the characters? What might be the context? How might the story go?

Doggy Bag

(a minute of silence & things to think about as you go):

- *Do you ever find yourself vying for important seats at the table or for the attention of those considered important (politically, economically, socially, etc)?*
- *Are there ways you want to be perceived that get in the way of you being genuine?*
- *Are there ways God is inviting you to his table that you've been rejecting?*

Clean-up:

- *Take a minute to share any praises or prayer requests with the group that you are comfortable sharing. Use the space below for notes to remember what's shared.*

- *Close in prayer for each other. You can take turns praying or have one or two people pray on your behalf.*

Benediction

God sees you.

You don't need to vie for a seat at his table.

And certainly not a seat of importance.

Come with your flaws and failures.

Come with your brokenness and pain.

Jesus invites you to eat and be filled.

Religious importance. Social importance.

Economic importance.

They are unimportant to God.

Simply receive his invitation and feast at his banquet.

May you enjoy his presence and his blessings

Both now and in eternity.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

4. A TRANSFORMING TABLE TALK

Serving the Drinks:

Most transformation happens over time. But can you think of a time - a moment - that was transformative for you... whether you knew it at the time or not? How/why was it transformative?

Setting the Table:

Those who are open to reading, take turns reading the following scripture aloud.

Luke 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. 2 There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. 3 He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.

5 When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today."

6 Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. 7 But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled.

8 Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"

9 Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."



Digging In:

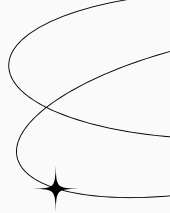
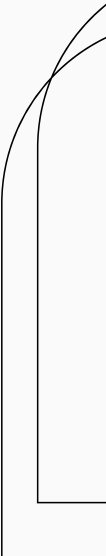
- *Who do you relate to in this story? How?*
- *Other than being short, why do you suppose this rich and important man would climb a tree to see Jesus? Why is Jesus stopping to give him attention significant?*
- *What is Jesus teaching the various people in this story? (Zacchaeus? The crowd? Jesus' disciples?)*
- *Look up Leviticus 6:4-5. What was the laws expectation for Zacchaeus if he was trying to make things right? What did Zacchaeus commit to doing?*
- *What did Jesus say to Zacchaeus to prompt Zacchaeus' action?*
- *How does Jesus respond to Zacchaeus' commitment?*

Dessert - A Group Reimagination:

Together, consider the story. Try to reimagine it in today's context. Who might be the characters? What might be the context? How might the story go?

Doggy Bag

(a minute of silence & things to think about as you go):

- *Is there anyone you struggle, like the crowd did, to accept that Jesus would give time and attention to? Or do you struggle to believe that God really cares for you. Spend some time with God asking the Spirit to open your heart to Jesus love - for whoever you struggle to see as worth it. May you learn, like Zaccaeus, to accept Jesus love with joy.*
 - *Are there situations in your past where you have wronged someone - intentionally or not - that you still think about? Is there a creative way amends might be approached?*
- 
- 

Clean-up:

- *Take a minute to share any praises or prayer requests with the group that you are comfortable sharing. Use the space below for notes to remember what's shared.*

- *Close in prayer for each other. You can take turns praying or have one or two people pray on your behalf.*

Benediction

God sees you.

Crowding close or desperately searching.

Jesus sees you and longs to come and sit with you.

Not only welcoming you into life with him,

But coming into your life with you.

Sitting at your table. Eating in communion with you.

Not everyone will like it. Not everyone will like you.

But the creator of the universe does!

He's excited to be with you.

Sit with him. Hear his voice.

And may your response to his presence

extend his generosity and love to those around you

As an overflow of your joy and for the good and joy of the world.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

5. A TABLE TALK WITH THE IGNORANT & ENEMY

Serving the Drinks:

If you could have a dinner party with 2 people - living or dead - who would you enjoy a meal with? Why? (In your own mind, think about who you would least want at that table. Why?)

Setting the Table:

Those who are open to reading, take turns reading the following scripture aloud.

Luke 22:7-38

7 Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread arrived, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed. 8 Jesus sent Peter and John ahead and said, "Go and prepare the Passover meal, so we can eat it together."

9 "Where do you want us to prepare it?" they asked him.

10 He replied, "As soon as you enter Jerusalem, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him. At the house he enters, 11 say to the owner, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?'" 12 He will take you upstairs to a large room that is already set up. That is where you should prepare our meal." 13 They went off to the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover meal there.

14 When the time came, Jesus and the apostles sat down together at the table. 15 Jesus said, "I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. 16 For I tell you now that I won't eat this meal again until its meaning is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God."

17 Then he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. Then he said, "Take this and share it among yourselves. 18 For I will not drink wine again until the Kingdom of God has come."

19 He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

20 After supper he took another cup of wine and said, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you."

21 "But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend, is the man who will betray me. 22 For it has been determined that the Son of Man must die. But what sorrow awaits the one who betrays him." 23 The disciples began to ask each other which of them would ever do such a thing.

24 Then they began to argue among themselves about who would be the greatest among them. 25 Jesus told them, "In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called 'friends of the people.' 26 But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. 27 Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves."

28 "You have stayed with me in my time of trial. 29 And just as my Father has granted me a Kingdom, I now grant you the right 30 to eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom. And you will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

31 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. 32 But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers."

33 Peter said, "Lord, I am ready to go to prison with you, and even to die with you."

34 But Jesus said, "Peter, let me tell you something. Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me."

35 Then Jesus asked them, “When I sent you out to preach the Good News and you did not have money, a traveler’s bag, or an extra pair of sandals, did you need anything?”

“No,” they replied.

36 “But now,” he said, “take your money and a traveler’s bag. And if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one! 37 For the time has come for this prophecy about me to be fulfilled: ‘He was counted among the rebels.’[d] Yes, everything written about me by the prophets will come true.”

38 “Look, Lord,” they replied, “we have two swords among us.”

“That’s enough,” he said.

Digging In:

- *Who do you relate to in this story? How?*
- *What human emotions can you imagine Jesus feeling as he shares this meal with his disciples who seem incapable of understanding what he’s told them while one of them is in the process of betraying him to death?*
- *Although they can’t understand it yet, what is Jesus teaching the various people in this story? (Judas? Peter? The other disciples?)*
- *What might Jesus’ words in verse 32 have soon meant to Peter?*
- *What do Jesus’ words in verses 24-30 suggest about what things (like power) should look like among Jesus’ followers? What does this conversation, on the heels of verses 21-23, demonstrate about our human tendencies?*
- *Do verses 35-38 suggest anything about what the disciples’ life will look like after this? If so, what? Does it, by implication, suggest anything about what our lives might look like at Jesus’ followers? If so, what?*

Dessert - A Group Reimagination:

Together, consider the story. Try to reimagine it in today’s context. Who might be the characters? What might be the context? How might the story go?



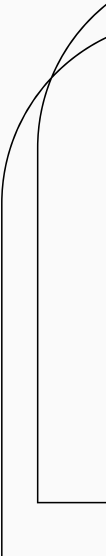
Doggy Bag

(a minute of silence & things to think about as you go):

- *Do you ever forget just how much Jesus loves you and gave up to have a relationship with you? What are some things that help you remember?*
- *Have you been severely misunderstood or betrayed by people who claimed to love you? How have you responded? How does Jesus' example challenge or encourage you?*
- *Jesus prays for Peter. Before Peter directly denies Jesus, Jesus is looking toward his repentance and the key role he will play among the disciples. Can you understand or imagine that Jesus has this kind of preemptive forgiveness for you? Are there things from your past that you are holding against yourself? Jesus invites you to hear and receive his forgiveness and invitation into the full life he offers in relationship with the rest of his followers.*

Clean-up:

- *Take a minute to share any praises or prayer requests with the group that you are comfortable sharing. Use the space below for notes to remember what's shared.*

 - *Close in prayer for each other. You can take turns praying or have one or two people pray on your behalf.*
- 



Benediction

God doesn't expect you for full understanding.

Jesus invites you to the table to eat with him.

The Spirit knows that you only understand what you can right now.

*The Divine offers you himself - his body, broken for you - his blood,
shed for you*

Not because of your knowledge

Not because you won't betray him

Not because you're willing to suffer or die for him

But because he loves you.

So take and eat. Receive God's generous gift of himself.

*Revel in the full life he offers - not confusing it with a comfortable
one.*

And, strengthened by the Spirit of Christ,

Pass the Love to others who are looking and longing for more.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.



6. TABLE TALK WITH FELLOW TRAVELLERS

Serving the Drinks:

Share about the best road trip - short or long - that you've ever been on. What made it so special?

Setting the Table:

Those who are open to reading, take turns reading the following scripture aloud.

Luke 24:13-35

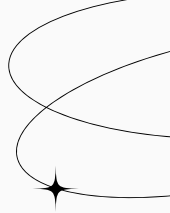
13 That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. 15 As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. 16 But God kept them from recognizing him.

17 He asked them, "What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?"


They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. 18 Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days."

19 "What things?" Jesus asked.

"The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth," they said. "He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. 20 But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. 21 We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago."



22 "Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. 23 They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! 24 Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said."

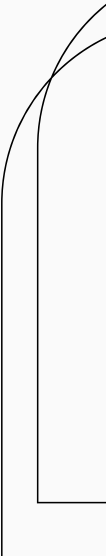


25 Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. 26 Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?" 27 Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

28 By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, 29 but they begged him, "Stay the night with us, since it is getting late." So he went home with them. 30 As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. 31 Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

32 They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" 33 And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, 34 who said, "The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter."

35 Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread.





Digging In:

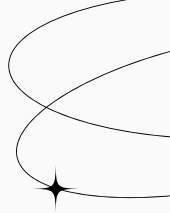
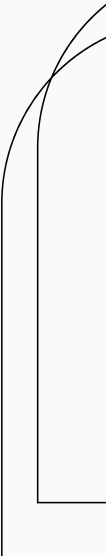
- *Who do you relate to in this story? How?*
- *What is Jesus' first posture towards these forlorn disciples as he approaches them?*
- *The two images of a journey (a path) and a meal are used to describe the Christian life. How does this story demonstrate the value of both? What happens on the road that might not happen at the table and vice versa?*
- *What is the disciples' response to what they learn and see?*
- *Can you think of a moment when you suddenly became very aware of the presence of Jesus? Are you willing to share it with the group? How did this impact you?*

Dessert - A Group Reimagination:

Together, consider the story. Try to reimagine it in today's context. Who might be the characters? What might be the context? How might the story go?

Doggy Bag

(a minute of silence & things to think about as you go):

- *How easy is it for you to recognize the presence of Jesus in your day-to-day, hour-to-hour journey of life? Are there things you could do to foster that awareness?*
 - *These travelling disciples had Jesus teach them all about how the Old Testament was pointing towards him and how he fulfilled it. Reflect on how your understanding of the Bible and Jesus has grown throughout your journey with Jesus.*
 - *Are you currently walking difficult roads? Ask God to clearly walk those roads with you helping you to learn and to know the presence of the Spirit as you journey.*
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Clean-up:

- *Take a minute to share any praises or prayer requests with the group that you are comfortable sharing. Use the space below for notes to remember what's shared.*

- *Close in prayer for each other. You can take turns praying or have one or two people pray on your behalf.*

Benediction

*Jesus, the Living Word, is the lamp to your feet
and the light to your path.*

*Yes, we sometimes run ahead or fall behind the Spirit
and stumble in the dark.*

*And sometimes fog or clouds or overwhelming darkness
make it hard to discern the Light.*

But the darkness cannot overcome it.

May you keep your eyes trained on that which the light illuminates;

May you follow where he leads;

And may the One who is The Way lead you on your journey

Both today and tomorrow and to your ultimate home.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

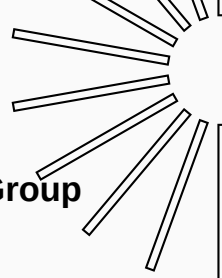
Amen.





Suggested Guidelines for an Welcoming Group

Adapted from Emotionally Healthy Spirituality

- **Safety and Confidentiality:** In order to create an environment that is safe for open and honest participation, please limit your sharing to your own personal experiences. Be sensitive, kind, and generous to one another with your comments. In addition, anything personal shared within the group should not be repeated outside the group.
 - **Speak for Yourself:** Use “I” statements as often as possible. Silence It is okay to have silence between responses as the group shares, giving members the opportunity to reflect. Remember, there is no pressure to share.
 - **No Fixing, No Saving, No Setting Other People Straight:** This is one of the hardest guidelines to follow. But it is vital to growing in Christ. Respect their journey and trust the process of the Holy Spirit inside of them to lead them to all truth in his time.
 - **Respect Others:** Be brief in your sharing, remaining mindful that there are time limitations and others may want to share.
 - **Turn to Wonder:** If you feel judgmental or defensive when someone else is sharing, ask yourself: I wonder what brought her to this belief? I wonder what he is feeling right now? I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?
 - **Be Prepared:** To get the most out of your time together, we highly recommend that you review the session in advance. Listening to Sunday’s sermon isn’t necessary, but it may be helpful. Please also bring your discussion guide with you each week.
 - **Timing:** Resolve to begin and end on time to respect each other’s other responsibilities and commitments.
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