

Luke 24:13-43

Aim of Lesson

To show how Jesus comforted his disciples by revealing himself to them after his resurrection.

Background study

Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53; Luke 24:1-11; John 2:19-22. You should be familiar with the details of a room at an inn, or a typical living-room in New Testament times. Emmaus was seven miles north west of Jerusalem.

Suggested outline of lesson

Remind the children of the lesson about the discovery of the empty tomb, and set the scene for this sequel. Talk about the reactions of the disciples to the death of Jesus, their sorrow, bewilderment and acute disappointment. They had acclaimed him to be the Messiah, God's own son, the prophesied king of Israel, and they were greatly distressed by his crucifixion and the apparent triumph of his enemies.

This incident may be told effectively from the viewpoint of the unnamed disciple, who may have been Cleopas' wife Mary. Ask the children to imagine that you are that disciple and begin with such words as: "As Cleopas and I were walking the seven miles back home to Emmaus, we were feeling very unhappy ...". This narrative should convey the depression and confusion of the two travellers, who were prevented from recognizing Jesus. As he joined them, they assumed he was a stranger, never for once considering that he could be their Master. However, they were surprised to discover that even a stranger in Jerusalem had not heard about the crucifixion, which had aroused such strong feelings among large numbers of people. Tell how they confided their troubles and their dashed hopes to this "stranger", and how they spoke of the visit of the women to the tomb. They had found it hard to believe the report of the women that angels had declared Jesus to be alive. Some of their company had rushed to the tomb and found the body gone, but they had not seen Jesus. This retelling of the distress and confusion experienced by those disciples will help the children to understand their state of mind, and should help to provide a sharp contrast with the latter part of the lesson.

The disciples' spirits lifted when the "stranger" talked to them, helping them to understand what the scriptures had to say about the coming of the Messiah. This made them eager for more of his company, and they persuaded him to accept their hospitality. Help the children to gain a clear picture of the room into which they went - dark and shadowy, lit only by an oil lamp, since it was evening. Expressive hands and face can help in recounting the blessing and the breaking of the bread, which Jesus handed to them. Convey the impact of their sudden recognition and Jesus' equally sudden disappearance. Discuss the reasons why this particular act of his should have brought recognition. The two were now alone, stunned by the realization of what they had witnessed. When Jesus left them so, too, did all their doubts and despair, and they knew for certain that Jesus was alive. Despite the lateness of the hour and the dangers of travelling at night, they could not wait to hurry back to Jerusalem with the news. Describe how they found the other disciples already excited by the news that Jesus had appeared to Simon Peter. In an atmosphere of elation, they told the story of their thrilling meeting with Jesus and the way in which he had explained to them the reason for his death and resurrection, and how prophecy had been fulfilled.

Describe the effect of Jesus' further appearance to the company of disciples, while they were all gathered together, and impress upon the children the assurance that his resurrection was a physical, tangible one. They could see and touch him, and he shared their meal.

Relevance to the children's lives

Why were the disciples so excited when they recognized Jesus? You have heard other stories of people who, by means of a miracle, were brought back to life. How was the resurrection of Jesus different? (Jesus was to die no more, and had risen in fulfilment of prophecy). When we are sure that Jesus rose from the dead, what can we hope for, with confidence?

Worksheets

These should be self-explanatory.

Prayer

Dear Lord God, we praise you and thank you that Jesus rose from the dead and is alive for evermore. Amen.

Memory verse

"Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32).