

**West Branch Community of Christ  
Sunday School Lesson Plan for Adults  
Year B – Third Sunday of Easter**

April 19, 2015

**Participant Guide**

Theme: Hope is Fulfilled

Central Ideas:

- God continues to be present in our lives even when we have doubts and fears.
- When we can set aside our fears, we can hear and receive scripture in ways that bring new understanding.
- We are called to be the messengers of repentance, forgiveness, and resurrection.

**Easter - Background**

Easter - the unearned gift of grace. The reflective season of "going in" that Lent provided (no matter what disciplines we undertook, nor even how well we attended to them) explodes on Easter. Of course, we cannot "figure it out." How comforting, then, to have these scriptures, showing first how the disciples struggled to grasp what had happened and then stories of Jesus before the crucifixion, which are written in the light of the Resurrection.

As Easter people we know, as Paul said, that nothing, not even death, shall separate us from the love of God. We are people who expect life out of death. And so, in Eastertide we celebrate the wonder and prepare ourselves to take the awesome message out into the world on Pentecost.

**A Notation for This Week's Gospel**

Words tumble from the mouths of the excited disciples as they try to convey what happened on the road to Emmaus. In mid-sentence, they hear "Peace be with you." Jesus is in their midst. Jesus encourages them to touch him and see that it is he. As they scramble to believe what they are seeing, Jesus casually asks them if, by any chance, they have anything to eat! They have broiled fish, which is shared all around.

**Luke 24:36b-48**

While the disciples were telling how they had seen Jesus risen from the dead, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you-- that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

**Lectionary Discussion**

In the scripture passages for today, there is the profound theme that God's faithful presence continues in the resurrection of Jesus. The author, Luke, clearly presents the resurrected Jesus as one who has a physical body and walks, talks, and eats. This concept alone asks us to open our minds to accept the idea that in and through Christ something is new and different. There are possibilities we have not considered or fathomed. We are invited to explore our faith journey.

In this passage, Jesus has been crucified and the rumors of people seeing him are moving fast through towns and cities. His followers are hearing rumors of his being alive and they don't understand. How can Jesus be seen walking here and there? Is he a ghost or spirit? They want to believe he is alive, but it just doesn't make sense to them.

When Jesus appears to his disciples, he recognizes their fears and says to them: "Peace be with you" (Luke 24:36b). And then he addresses each source of their doubts and fears. He extends his hands and feet for them to see the scars, he invites them to touch him, and he asks for food and eats fish. With each of these actions the disciple's fears are receding.

Now that fear and doubt are lessened, the disciples sit down with Jesus for scripture study. They have a new context to hear scripture through—resurrection. There is life after death. And there is new life now, through Jesus. The scriptures are being heard through hearts that have experienced the risen Messiah. The words of the prophets are fulfilled!

Jesus then renewed the disciples' call to discipleship when he told them they "are witnesses of these things" (v. 48). What they experienced is not for them alone, but the message is to be proclaimed to all nations.

This message of hope is ours today. God continues to be present in our lives, through our fears and doubts, as we open our minds and hearts to receive resurrection.

### **Discussion Questions**

- Notice the 14-mile round trip – on foot – at the end of a full day for both of the disciples and also for Jesus. When did the disciples know they were in the presence of Jesus?
- In today's passage, what are elements of gentleness, patience, and full-fledged humanity?
- As they ate broiled fish together/what do you suppose they remembered from the last meal they had all together? What had Jesus set up for them at that meal?
- When have fears and doubts kept you from recognizing the Holy Spirit moving in your life?
- How have you experienced or witnessed resurrection?
- Where do you see others engaging in acts of resurrection (bringing hope to the hopeless)?
- When do we notice Jesus in our midst? Where do we feel Jesus is present in our lives today?