



SESSION 1: ACCOMPANIMENT (MUTUALITY/HOSPITALITY)



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The walk to Emmaus, Luke 24:13-35

Cross-generational ministry

For directions on preparing for each session, review the “Accompaniment Bible Study Introduction.” Please note that in order to provide you with flexibility and choices in adapting each session to your particular setting, this facilitator guide contains more material than can be covered in a one-hour session. The guiding questions in the right column indicated in red provide the core elements of the study and should be ample material for a one-hour session.

SUMMARY

The story of the walk to Emmaus invites us to imagine ourselves in the place of the unnamed disciple, who together with Cleopas, was surprised to learn about Accompaniment from a seeming stranger. In this first session we explore “mutuality,” particularly as we seek to walk with others across generational differences.

ACCOMPANIMENT VALUE: MUTUALITY

Together, we work to build up our capacities to proclaim and live out the gospel of Christ. We work to recognize that all of us have gifts to offer to God’s mission, and to value the gifts of all, while caring for one another’s needs. Mutuality is built upon giving and receiving trust as we grow together.

ACCOMPANIMENT CAPACITY: HOSPITALITY

How can we move beyond a generic welcome to creating a space that our companions find truly welcoming, where their gifts are honored and expressed? Christ’s mission of reconciliation is an intimate challenge to the way we live and to our fear of vulnerability.



<p>Welcome participants as they come in. Invite them to introduce themselves if they don't already know each other, making sure to give a special welcome to anyone who is new to the group.</p> <p>TIP: You may want to consider setting up candles or a centerpiece on a table as a way to mark the space as sacred and make it more inviting. Have a variety of Bible versions available, including children's Bibles.</p> <p>CROSS-GENERATIONAL TIP: Throughout this study you will find opportunities to engage people across generations. For reflections on the value</p> <p>Welcome participants as they come in. Invite them to introduce themselves if they don't already know each other, making sure to give a special welcome to anyone who is new to the group.</p>	<p>Welcome and Opening Prayer (2 min)</p> <p><i>You may offer an opening prayer or invite a participant to lead the group in prayer.</i></p>
<p>This first session introduces the idea of Accompaniment as “walking together.” This opening activity draws on the predominant image of the “walk to Emmaus” from Luke 24.</p> <p>TIP: If the number of participants is uneven, you can join one of the circles to be sure everyone has a partner.</p> <p>TIP: If the class is intentionally cross-generational, you may choose to divide the groups in a way that increases the opportunity for participants to partner with someone of a different age. For example, you could ask everyone under a certain age to step forward and form the inside circle. Ask individuals to move to a different circle as needed to even out the groups.</p>	<p>Walking together (8 min)</p> <p><i>Invite participants to stand up and form a circle around the room. Next ask that every other person around the circle take a step forward. Those who have stepped forward are the “inside” circle and those standing back are the “outside” circle. Face one another and align yourselves so everyone has a partner. The person across from you is your partner for this first question.</i></p> <p><i>Take one minute each to share briefly with your partner what's been going on with you this week.</i></p> <p><i>After both partners have shared, invite participants in the “inside” circle to wave “goodbye” to their partners and take two steps (two people) to the right to line up with a new partner in the “outer” circle for the next question.</i></p> <p><i>Take one minute each to share with your new partner about something you are looking forward to or are excited about — an upcoming event, a new toy, a work or home project, etc.</i></p>



<p>TIP: You may want to have a watch handy and indicate when a minute has elapsed to be sure both partners get to share. You may choose to make the sharing time shorter.</p>	<p><i>This time ask each person in the “outer circle” to move three steps (3 people) to the right to line up with a new partner.</i></p> <p><i>Now in a more serious note, take a minute each to share a word about a challenging or difficult moment in your life: an important event, concern, or grief that you find yourself often thinking about.</i></p> <p><i>Invite participants to return to their seats.</i></p>
	<p>Accompaniment (3 min)</p> <p><i>Thank the group for their participation in this first activity and ask: What was this like for you? What is it like to share with others what’s going on in our lives — what we’re excited about or worried about?</i></p> <p><i>Continue with the following brief introduction: Sharing with one another as we walk along life’s way is what “Accompaniment” is all about. Today we begin a five-week study series on this theme of “Accompaniment.” Each week we will share stories from the Bible and from our own lives. Having shared some of our own stories in our opening activity, now we turn to the Bible story that inspired that activity: the story of the walk to Emmaus. Found in Luke, chapter 24, this familiar story invites us to explore what it means to “walk together” with, to accompany, our brothers and sisters. It highlights the importance of sharing our joys and sorrows with those close to us. But it also challenges us to be open to the surprising gifts we may receive from those who are “strangers” to us.</i></p>
<p>Distribute copies of the “Scripture Handout” for this session, or invite people to turn in their Bibles to the story of “The walk to Emmaus” in Luke 24:13-35. If using the Scripture Handout, ask for volunteers to read the parts of two narrators, two disciples, and Jesus.</p> <p>Be mindful of group dynamics, paying attention to those who are hesitant to speak out and inviting them to do so by rephrasing a question or asking them</p>	<p>All the things that had happened (8-10 min)</p> <p>Read Luke 24:13-18</p> <p>What do you hear? What do you notice? What stands out to you?</p> <p><i>This story takes place just days after Jesus’ death on the cross. This was the very first Easter Sunday, when Jesus came back to life! However, at that time very few people knew that Jesus had been resurrected. Like the two disciples in the story, most of Jesus’ followers were</i></p>

one directly. It is often helpful to address individuals by name when asking them a question, so they feel a part of the group.

CROSS-GENERATIONAL TIP:

Kinesthetic learners (also known as “do-ers” for they learn best by doing) and younger participants may benefit from a more active approach to the conversation. Consider having some participants act the story as it is read, inviting them to emphasize the emotions of surprise, sadness and shock.

WHO WERE THE TWO DISCIPLES?

Verse 18 says that one of the two disciples Jesus encountered on the road was named Cleopas. He is often associated with the wife of one of the women who stood by Jesus’ cross in John 19:25 (even though the spelling of the name varies slightly). The other disciple is not named, and while some have speculated it could have been Celopas’ wife or perhaps his son, there is no way to know for sure. Interestingly, the fact that the story has an unnamed disciple, opens the door for us — the readers — to see ourselves in the story, to imagine ourselves being the other disciple.

Try to get the group to think about times when grief about major changes in our lives or in society prevents us from seeing others as our brothers and sisters — particularly those who are different from us, whom we may call “strangers.”

CROSS-GENERATIONAL TIP: In preparation for the session, identify one or two major events in your community or beyond (9/11, Newtown shootings, a leadership transition in the congregation). On sheets of paper write the following words in large letters: anger, sadness, confusion, fear. Place these either on the

still in deep shock and grief at his death. News that he had come back to life felt more like impossible rumors than good news. Take a closer look at the verses we just read, and underline or circle any portions that you think communicate how the disciples felt. What emotions are named or suggested in the text? What other emotions would you be feeling if you were in their place?

If participants are having a hard time identifying some of the emotions in the text, you can offer some of the following examples:

- *Fear: the two disciples were going to a village “about seven miles from Jerusalem.” They are traveling away from Jerusalem, likely because after Jesus’ violent death, they were afraid for their own well-being.*
- *Confusion: they were “talking and discussing.”*
- *Shock: in their grief, “their eyes were kept from recognizing him.”*
- *Anger: you can almost hear their tone of frustration as they ask Jesus, “are you the only stranger ...”*
- *Sadness: we are told that they “stood still, looking sad.”*

Their grief and fear prevent the two disciples from recognizing Jesus, their friend and master. What do you think the disciples thought or felt when a stranger approached them? Have there been times in your life, or in the life of your community, when a lot of change or a serious grief has made you or others leery of “strangers” (think of tragic events, crimes, deep losses)?

In frustration the disciples ask Jesus, “Are you the only stranger ...?” Name a time when you have felt like someone was totally out of touch — a young person who wasn’t aware of a major news event, or an older person who doesn’t seem interested in the upcoming release of a new technology. What did their seeming ignorance communicate to you?



<p>floor or on the walls in different parts of the room and then say to participants: “The disciples were recovering from shocking and very difficult news — perhaps like what our community felt after (name event). When you think about this event, is there one of the emotions posted around the room that you feel most strongly? Move to that area, and take a moment to talk with those around you about the emotions this event raises for you. How might the disciples have also shared that emotion? Share with the larger group.</p> <p>The disciples express surprise and even frustration that there could be someone who is unaware of something that is so important to them. We too may be suspicious of people who seem to hold different values or priorities from our own. Thankfully the story doesn’t end there, but invites us to “walk together” with this seeming stranger.</p>	
<p>CROSS-GENERATIONAL TIP: Consider inviting participants to return to the theme in the last question of the opening activity, when they shared “a word about a challenging or difficult moment in your life: an important event, concern, or grief that you find yourself often thinking about.” Following Jesus’ example in the text, take some time in groups of two or three to talk together about what has been helpful in getting through that event or concern in your life. You may choose to provide paper and color pencils or crayons to young participants to express their feelings through pictures if they prefer.</p> <p>It takes a lot of courage to name our hopes and dreams before others. There is such power in this image of Jesus walking next to us. Explore with</p>	<p>We had hoped (8-10 min)</p> <p>Read Luke 24:19-27</p> <p>What do you hear? What do you notice? What stands out?</p> <p>Even though he already knows the answer, Jesus asks the aggrieved disciples, “What things?” His question is an invitation for them to try to name their grief in their own words, to share what this all has meant to them. In groups of two or three, share with each other a time when you found it helpful to talk with someone about an issue or event in your life.</p> <p>We are told that Jesus “came near” the disciples and “went with them” (verse 15). Eventually they dare to open up even about their dashed hopes (verse 21). What helps you to open up about something important?</p> <p>Verse 27 says that “beginning with Moses and the</p>

participants what helps them to open up to others about their hopes and dreams. To make it more concrete, you could begin by asking them to say what they hope to be “when they grow up” (literally for younger participants, more creatively for older ones) or by inviting them to name some of the things in their “bucket list” (a phrase that refers to the things we hope to do or accomplish in our lives).

Sounding rather harsh, Jesus calls the disciples “foolish,” because they failed to see the events they had witnessed in their larger context. Grief and sorrow often make it hard to see a perspective that may become clearer with time — they say hindsight is 20/20! Is it possible to acknowledge that we or others have a limited understanding while not dismissing the reality of our emotions at a time of loss.

CROSS-GENERATIONAL TIP: In groups of two or three, share the story of a ritual from the list to the right that was particularly meaningful for you. Share what you found meaningful, why, and how it made you feel.

EXTRA: We are told that Jesus interpreted the things that had happened for the disciples. When do we need interpretation? Invite the group into conversation about ways that older generations help younger ones to interpret things that matter in their lives. How do kids help older folks navigate something that is new? How do we accompany one another, knowing that we each have something to offer.

prophets...” Jesus placed the story they had shared with him in the context of God’s story. Think of ways in which our personal stories are placed in the larger story in the following rituals:

- Baptism
- Marriage
- Funeral
- Sunday worship communion

The stranger provided the disciples a new perspective on what had happened in their lives. Drawing on stories that were already important to them — the Scriptures — he helped them both voice their grief and imagine a different possibility. The stranger likely surprised the disciples with his knowledge and wisdom about the meaning of all that they had experienced that weekend. You may want to highlight that this change happens before the disciples realize who the stranger is! Before they know it is Jesus who has walked with them. The story illustrates that Accompaniment is not a one-way street, but one where everyone has a chance to offer their gifts. Yet, it is also not “tit-for-tat,” but rather an expression of mutuality. Mutuality is one of the “values of Accompaniment” that we will explore in this study. Learn more about these values in the introduction.

You may find it helpful to provide an example from your own life, of a moment that has “warmed your heart” — a powerful worship experience, the surprising kindness of a stranger, etc.

EXTRA: Write the following quote on the board or on a sheet of paper, and invite the group to respond to what they hear in it: “Hospitality . . . means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines. It is not to lead our neighbor into a corner where there are no alternatives left, but to open a wide spectrum of options for choice and commitment.” Henri Nouwen, “Reaching Out” (1975). p. 93.

Stay with us (8-10 min)

Read Luke 24:28-35

What do you hear? What do you notice? What stands out?

The disciples, who began the story being described as tentative, sad and even foolish, turn into the hosts with the courage to invite a stranger to join them for a meal. What do you think brought about the change?

Having received solace from this stranger, the disciples now want to offer him something as well. How important is it for you to be able to correspond when someone does something for you? In those cases, what makes the difference between a simple “tit-for-tat” and a desire for “mutuality”?

What are moments in your life that have “warmed your heart”? Have those moments lasted?

Just as the disciples realize who the stranger is, he disappears. Yet the memory of that moment lives on. How does the memory of moments that have “warmed your heart” impact your life?

Even though it’s late at night, the disciples return to Jerusalem right away. They recognize that valuable as this moment has been, they won’t get the full sense of the story until they expand the circle around the table. Look around the table and ask, who is missing around our table? Who should we be in relationship with to get a fuller sense of the story?



<p>The disciples experienced true Accompaniment in the “breaking of the bread.” Yet that moment didn’t last. That’s the way it often goes with our efforts to walk together with others — to “accompany” one another. Sometimes we get it right. Sometimes we mess up! Yet we treasure those moments when we get a glimpse for what it means to truly live in Accompaniment, those moments that “warm our hearts.”</p> <p>Re-energized by their encounter with Jesus, the disciples soon realize that they need to join with others. Invite participants to think about who is missing “around the table” in your congregation. Are there age groups, neighbors, ethnic or cultural groups in your community that are not represented in your congregation? How might our understanding of the story of God be incomplete without their perspective?</p>	
	<p>From Head to Heart (3 min)</p> <p><i>Encourage participants to connect today’s conversation with their lives throughout the week. You could open it up and invite everyone to share ideas on how they would like to do that during the week or share some of the suggestions below.</i></p> <p>Accompaniment Outing: make plans to share an experience together this coming week — either with someone in the group or with a relative or friend of a different generation: go to a grandchild’s game and go out afterward for ice cream and a chat; bring a neighbor kid to visit your workplace, join the youth group on a visit to the nursing home, etc.</p> <p>Watch Disney’s UP: make arrangements to watch this movie on your own or with others. The movie provides a great way to explore the idea of Accompaniment. In it, 8-year-old Russell offers to “accompany” retired balloon salesman Carl Fredriksen as he crosses the street, only to discover how far we can go when we</p>



	<p>dare to share adventure — or just ice cream — with someone we may otherwise think of as a stranger.</p> <p>Walk for a Cause: embody the power of “walking together” — as Jesus did with the disciples on the road to Emmaus — by checking out events in your community from CROP Walk’s “we walk because they walk” (http://www.cropwalk.org) to joining cancer survivors for a Susan G. Comen for the Cure event (http://ww5.komen.org/).</p>
	<p>Closing Prayer (3 min)</p> <p><i>You may offer an opening prayer or invite a participant to lead the group in prayer.</i></p> <p>Accompaniment Journal: One option you may want to consider is asking participants to keep an Accompaniment Journal throughout the five weeks of the study. You would provide each participant with a copy of the “Accompaniment Values and Capacities” hand out from the Appendix. Each week participants would spend time reflecting on the Accompaniment value and capacity for the week, and write about connections they see with the biblical story, their daily lives, or events they hear about in the congregation, community or the news.</p>