

Learning Together Easter 3 The Road to Emmaus

Have a cup, the faces/vase picture and the picture of the cup (or one you have drawn of your model cup) ready

Two men were walking down a road away from Jerusalem and talking about how sad they felt that Jesus had been crucified and killed. It was still that first Easter morning, and they had only just heard about the empty tomb, but they weren't sure they believed the story. Another man walked up to them and asked them why they were so sad. (Now there wasn't any social distancing going on at that time, so it was okay for all of them to walk closely together down the road.) "Haven't you heard what happened?" they asked him, not even recognizing the man was Jesus himself.

Have you ever had that happen, where you see someone you know, but you don't recognize them right away because there is something different about them or you just weren't expecting them to be in that place? Maybe you see your teacher at the beach instead of school, and it takes you a minute to recognize him in this new place? Maybe he's wearing a bathing suit instead of his regular shirt and tie? Maybe he shaved his beard?

I often wondered about this story of the men on the road – if they men didn't recognize Jesus simply because during the crucifixion, the soldiers had pulled out his beard and taken his regular clothes, so he looked very different? Or maybe it was because they had never seen him on that road before? Or maybe they simply weren't ready to believe he was alive again? I wonder if the men had been blind, whether they would have recognized him by his voice and if their eyes actually kept them from seeing who he was?

Anyway, for whatever reason, the men didn't recognize him, even when he spoke to them the way he always had, talking and teaching. They walked and talked all the way down the road with him for seven miles. Still they couldn't see who he was. But feeling like they had made a new friend, they invited him to have dinner with them. And that's when it happened! Jesus took the bread, blessed it and broke it, the way he always did and, in that action, they recognized him immediately. After that he disappeared.

This is a story about seeing – seeing unexpected things, or seeing them in a new way – seeing not just with your eyes but also with your heart. I want to show you a picture. *(hold up vase/face silhouette picture)* What do you see? Do you see two people talking? Or do you see a white vase? How about when I hold up my hands like this? *(Hold up your hands, curling your fingers to make a heart shape)* You see a heart. This is something artist call "negative space."



I want to challenge you this week, if you are able, to try and look at things in a different way by getting a pencil and paper and trying to draw something, not by looking directly at it, but by looking at the space around it. It doesn't matter whether you think of yourself as an artist or not. Just challenge your mind and give it a try! Keep yourself sharp in this time of staying at home!

Try it with something simple like a cup. Instead of looking at the cup and trying to draw its shape, look at the shapes around it. Look at the hole in the handle, rather than the handle itself. (*Hold up cup and point to the shape*) What shape do you see? What shape do you see around it? (*Hold up cup drawing*) If you want a real challenge, try it with a chair or a vase of flowers. See how you can see things differently!

Say this echo prayer with me:

Dear God...thank you for eyes that see...and hands that draw....Help us to remember...that there are other ways...of seeing...and understanding...the world around us....We pray in Jesus' name...Amen.



