



DISCOVER ANEW: WHAT GOD HAS DONE!

PURPOSE:

We want to begin by remembering what God has already done in the world.

This will help us focus on being a missional church, where everything we do as a church and as individuals springs from our desire to be centred on God's purpose.

MEANS:

To explore how our eyes have been opened to God's activity in history and around us today.

SCRIPTURE:

Luke 24:13-31

SYMBOL:

Open eyes

GETTING STARTED IN THE SERIES:

Leader's introduction:

Today I invite you on a journey of discovery—to discover where God has already been active in our lives, where God is presently acting, and where God is longing to take us. The journey is about you and me and how we can centre our lives on this God of action and intervention and creativity. Along the way we will ask ourselves, over and over and in a variety of ways, whether we are in tune with God's mission in the world. Our journey will take six weeks. At the end we will take all that we have discovered in our wanderings and ask, "Where do we go from here?" A Follow-up Team is already in place and will be actively involved and discovering with us. (Leader may want to introduce the Follow-up Team.) As we begin, I invite you to take on a spirit of adventure. Let's be ready and open for discovery and growth.

FOCUS/GETTING STARTED:

On each table, have some object that is not immediately obvious (the picture of the young woman and the old woman—*Resource Materials, page 24*). Or you may wish to use a "Magic Eye" illustration (sometimes available in newspaper comics). Or some very tiny print that requires a magnifying glass. Invite people to examine the specimen for a minute and then describe what they see.

Leader: Sometimes things come to us that we do not

understand or cannot see right away. We try, but it is as if our eyes are closed. And then suddenly there is some kind of intervention and we can see again. (Leader wonders in awe.) In our life with Christ, what is it that opens our eyes and helps us to see new things or discover anew?!

ENGAGE IN AND DISCOVER THE TEXT:

Text presentation: Requires 4 readers

The text (Luke 24:13-31) is prepared in dramatized form below, using the NRSV. Two commentators interrupt the "drama" with observations about how the two Emmaus friends move from closed eyes to open eyes.

Two disciples should be equipped with glasses that have cardboard taped over the lenses, perhaps a small hole could be cut in the middle so that they can still see. (Glasses with card board "blindings" attached to the side or flip-down sun glasses would also work.) The two disciples put these glasses on when the narrator reads "but their eyes were kept from recognizing him" and they are removed at the end when the narrator reads "then their eyes were opened".

The Walk to Emmaus (Session 1)

Leader: Our journey begins on the day of resurrection. Jesus has risen from the dead, he has apparently been seen and two of his friends are discussing this. They are in deep grief and are confused about this strange story that their friend, Jesus, has risen from the dead.



Narrator: Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. (*The two disciples now put on their blinders.*)

Commentator 1: Now look at this—he's right with them, that's Jesus walking with them, and they don't see it.

Commentator 2: But the question is: Were they expecting to meet him on the road? I'm not sure I would have recognized him either. But you're right; they just don't see it.

Narrator: And Jesus said to them,

Jesus: "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?"

Narrator: They stood still, looking sad.

Commentator 1: He's clearly overcome with grief; he's looking right at Jesus, and he can't see him.

Narrator: Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him,

Cleopas: "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?"

Jesus: "What things?"

The other disciple: "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him.

Cleopas: But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place.

The other disciple: Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him."

Jesus: "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?"

Narrator: Then, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

Commentator 1: I'm not sure they're really getting it...?

Commentator 2: Not yet, but if you look at their eyes, you can see they are listening closely.

Narrator: As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying,

Cleopas: "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over."

Narrator: So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. (*Disciples remove blinders*)

Commentator 2: They got it, they got it, did you see that?!

Commentator 1: Well there you have it folks... he walked with them, he talked with them, he taught them the stories, finally he ate with them and they got it. Their eyes were opened. Amazing!

RESPOND:

Leader:

In the story, the disciples move from closed to open eyes. In the movement from closed eyes to open eyes, Jesus has walked with them, taught them from the Scriptures, had fellowship with them and finally, in the breaking of the bread, they know Jesus. They didn't get it right away, but over time they came to recognize Jesus. With even more time they came to a fuller understanding of his message and the meaning of his life, death and resurrection. They were always being stretched, over and over again, their eyes were being opened to understand and experience new things about God.

A) QUESTIONS

1. Looking back, when/how have your eyes been opened to see Jesus walking with you?
2. Looking back, when/how have your eyes as a congregation been opened to see Jesus walking with you as a congregation?

(Table Guides: if your group struggles to know how to answer these questions, you can suggest that they spend some time in quiet reflection, looking at pivotal life events like baptism, service projects, moves, marriage, birth of children, death, common church service projects, youth group events, small group experiences, etc.)

B) RECORDING

On the tables are half sheets of coloured paper (the colour matches the colour on the banner for "Our eyes were opened"). See *Resource Materials, page 25*.

Invite each person in the group to use the paper to list one way or one time that their eyes were opened to see Jesus.

C) SHARING

Have the table groups share with the whole group some key events that were listed particularly as they relate to the whole congregation. Table Guides can facilitate the reporting.

CLOSING:

Invite people to come forward to place sheets of paper on the banner. Leader: Point out that this banner will be a roadmap of God's activity in our congregation over the course of the journey. New things will be on each leg of the trip, and when this journey is over, the banner will be like a memory album of the experience.

Sing "Open our eyes Lord we want to see Jesus" or "Open my eyes that I may see" HWB 517 or "Guide my feet" HWB 546 adding "Help me see" as a final verse.

AND/OR

Prayer from each table concludes with a prayer for their group, noting some of the concerns/issues that may have come up, praying also for open eyes.



... IF YOU LOOK AT THEIR EYES, YOU CAN SEE
THEY ARE LISTENING CLOSELY.

OPEN OUR EYES LORD

Discover Anew!

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Session 1:









YOUNG WOMAN / OLD WOMAN

(COPY AND DISTRIBUTE AROUND THE TABLES)

OPTIONAL VERSES FOR THE THE SONG, *OPEN OUR EYES*

- Session 1: Open our eyes...
- Session 2: Burn in our hearts Lord and help us witness
- Session 3: Open our arms Lord and help us to welcome
- Session 4: Open our lips Lord and help us to witness
OR Open our hands Lord and help us to witness
- Session 5: Open our ears Lord and help us to listen
- Session 6: Open our hands Lord and help us to worship
- Session 6: Send us your Spirit and clothe us with power

BANNER SYMBOLS: (SEE FOLLOWING PAGES)

-  Session 1. Our eyes were opened...
-  Session 2. Our hearts burned within...
-  Session 3. Our hands reach out...
-  Session 4. We are the face of Christ...
-  Session 5. We wait in worship...
-  Session 6. We are clothed with power...

Session 1. Our eyes were opened...



Session 1. Our eyes were opened...

