



Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: PRIMARY

**How can we have hope for
tomorrow?**



KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

The biblical story of the Road to Emmaus describes the experience of two disciples as they were walking from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus. Focussing on their problems and disappointments after recent events, the disciples fail to realise that Jesus has met them on their journey. Through offering insight and perspective, Jesus leaves the disciples now hopeful for the future. What can we learn from this narrative? How can we have hope for tomorrow?

'As the day ends, put your worries to rest. Tomorrow is another day, filled with hope, potential and promise'

Sue Krebs

BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

Road to Emmaus ([Luke 24: 13-35](#))

'Jesus came up and walked along with them'



Gathering

Follow the school's normal gathering routines for class-based/bubble worship.

Either:

Ask: I wonder what words or images come into you mind when you hear the word 'hope'? or

Place the sentence starter, 'Hope is...' on the board. I wonder how you might finish this sentence?

Share some thoughts as a class.



In our collective worship today, we are going to think about an encounter in the Bible between Jesus and two of his disciples. It will help us to think more deeply about the question 'How can we have hope for tomorrow?'.

Engagement

Watch the 'Road to Emmaus' video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndtnZV-5QTo>.

In what follows, the story will be explored through three images and the acronym 'DAOR' ('road' backwards). You might wish to copy or print the three images to show pupils. The letters (and subsequent words) can be written on a whiteboard.

In this story, we meet two disciples as they are journeying from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus. When we look back at this biblical story, there are some things that stand out:



At the start of this story, we find the disciples **disappointed** and **disheartened** (add to the 'D' on the board). The disciples had lost hope because of what had happened in Jerusalem a few days before. Jesus had died and his body had gone missing; they were expecting things to turn out a little bit differently... Wasn't Jesus the promised Messiah who would overthrow the Romans and bring peace to all? That dream seemed a little lost...



As a result, the disciples were a little **anxious** (add to the 'A' on the board). 'What did the future hold now? What could we now hope for?' The disciples were so worried that they could only focus on their troubles and disappointments. They were so worried they didn't recognise that the person, who was now walking alongside them, was Jesus.



As they travelled, Jesus asked what was troubling them. The disciples explained the events of the last few days – how Jesus had died and how there were now reports that his body had gone missing. Jesus listened very carefully, and then started to **open up new possibilities** (add to the 'O' on the board). He explained that the messengers and prophets of old had all pointed to these things happening; do not worry, all of these things will turn out well. And, as they ate together, their eyes were opened too – they finally recognised that this person was Jesus himself!

The disciples **realised** that they had lots of **reasons to be hopeful** (add words in bold to the 'R' on the board). Through walking with and meeting Jesus, they were no longer disappointed or disheartened; they now thought that Jesus' death and missing body had actually pointed to the greatest hope possible. They ran back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples what they had seen and heard.

If those disciples were asked the question, 'How can you have hope for tomorrow?', I wonder what they would have answered? Perhaps they would have replied, 'we have hope because Jesus is alive and joined us on our journey!'.

Many Christians today take hope from this belief – that Jesus is with them, knows about their disappointments and worries, and points forwards to a more hopeful tomorrow. There is a popular phrase for many Christians of ‘Let go and let God’; don’t worry about tomorrow, God will take care of it.

Response

I wonder if sometimes you feel a little like the disciples on the Road to Emmaus did – **disheartened**, **disappointed**, perhaps **anxious** about the future?

I wonder what this story makes you think about hope?



Perhaps it makes you think that you are supported by others as you travel through life? For some, perhaps it’s your belief that God is with you each day.



Perhaps the story makes you think about worries. Sometimes, like the disciples in this story, we can focus so much on our worries that we miss important and bigger things that we can celebrate. Perhaps you have ways of putting worries aside or sharing them, which help you to think more about a better today and tomorrow. ‘Each day is a brand-new day’.

Perhaps the story makes you think about something else?

Take a moment to reflect.



The disciples left their encounter with Jesus changed, more hopeful for the future. Take a moment to think about the question, ‘What gives you hope for the future?’. If you’d like to, perhaps you could trace your answer with your finger on the top of your shoe as a reminder to take this message of hope with you as you travel this week. You could even reflect using this [‘Hope Rope’](#) activity.

Listen and reflect on the words of [‘Lord of all Hopefulness’](#) or [‘One more step along the world I go’](#).

Sending

Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for walking with us as we journey together through life. Thank you for walking with us through good times, as well as times when we might feel worried. Help us to be thankful for all good things, and to have hope each and every day. Amen.

Sending challenge:

Every time you take your shoes on or off this week, perhaps you might want to think about the Road to Emmaus story and the question ‘What makes me hopeful for the future?’

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

Listen to the song '[You've Got a Friend in Me](#)' by Randy Newman and reflect on the lyrics.

I wonder what the lyrics make you think about – do you see yourself hearing these words or saying them to others? I wonder how the lyrics might link to the Road to Emmaus story? How might these words give someone hope for the future?

Reflect on Banksy's 'Girl and Heart Balloon'. What does this artwork make you think about hope? What do you think the girl is thinking? What do you think the balloon might represent?

Do you agree with the words on the wall 'there is always hope'? If so, why?



ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Use the **EXAMEN** prayer to reflect on hope. It has five steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS for something that was good today and for those that help and support you
2. ASK FOR HELP with something you have lost hope for
3. REFLECT on your day and think about the things that made you feel hopeful 😊 and the things that felt unhelpful 😞
4. SAY SORRY for the times you gave up hope or focussed too much on the problems of today, or took away someone else's hope
5. DECIDE how you will keep hold of hope tomorrow

To discover more about using the Ignatian Examen with children, listen to this [podcast](#).

Shoe reflection

In the Road to Emmaus collective worship plan this week, we reflected on how Jesus encountered the disciples on their journey, turning their feelings of anxiety for the future towards feelings of hope.



Invite pupils to reflect on the Road to Emmaus story each time they put on or take off their shoes each week. *What gives you hope for the future?*

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES

The story of the Road to Emmaus, as explored in this Faith at Home, draws attention to three themes.

First, we meet the disciples travelling from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus. We find them disappointed and disheartened; they had lost hope because of what had happened in Jerusalem a few days before. Jesus had died and his body had gone missing; the disciples were expecting things to turn out a little bit differently. Wasn't Jesus the promised Messiah who would overthrow the Romans and bring peace to all? In focussing too much on their worries and concerns, they failed to notice who had joined them.

Do we sometimes focus too much on our worries that we miss the hope and good things right in front of our eyes?

Second, the story tells of Jesus joining the disciples on their journey; he walks alongside them and listens to their fears for the future. In putting things into perspective, Jesus helps the disciples realise that there is a lot to be hopeful for. Many Christians feel that life is a bit like the 'Road to Emmaus' – Jesus walks with them and points to a more hopeful future.

Who supports us on our life journeys? Who do we turn to when we are worried about the future?

Thirdly, following their encounter with Jesus, the disciples were able to reflect back on their journey. Their eyes were opened to a more hopeful future as they had discovered new things about God and themselves.

What have you learnt about yourself, God or life over the past year which gives you hope?

How can you have hope for the future? Where does that hope come from?

INVITATIONAL

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

INCLUSIVE

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is 'what Christians believe', saying things like:

'I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?'

'The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ...'

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

INSPIRING

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?