

Breaking Bread

Renowned Jesus scholar John Dominic Crossan made a profound statement about this week's gospel reading. "Emmaus never happened," Crossan wrote. "Emmaus always happens." What we are invited to grapple with in that statement is the truth that the factual (historical) significance of the resurrection stories is secondary to a more profound truth: the risen Christ is with us. Now. Here. That is what the early church began to learn, and it is what enabled them to move on.

Focus scripture: Luke 24:13–35

On the Emmaus Road, the hearts of two disciples burned as they listen to Jesus. Luke 24:13–35 tells that Cleopas and "a companion, perhaps his wife," are walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus talking about – and weighed down by – Jesus' crucifixion. When Jesus joins them on the road, they do not recognize him immediately; perhaps their grief and loss blind them. It is when they offer Jesus hospitality, a sign of love, and when he blesses and breaks bread that the revelation happens, and they recognize the stranger with whom they have been walking and talking. A transformation takes place within the travellers; they shift from standing still in a state of sadness to being "on fire" with hope. In great haste, they return to Jerusalem to tell the other followers of Jesus what they have experienced: Christ's resurrection and their own.

Acts 2:14a, 36–41 paints quite a picture. Peter and the other apostles are standing outside proclaiming and explaining to the gathered crowd about the crucified Jesus. Peter simply tells the story. The listeners' response is dramatic – recognizing the truth of what they have heard, they were "cut to the heart" and ask how they should respond. They are baptized and become some of the first members of the church. There is forgiveness, and a chance to turn again: God holds nothing against us, the promise is for all. Peter's accusation of the Jewish people for crucifying Jesus could be seen as anti-Semitic until we remember that Peter (as well as Jesus) is himself Jewish. His complaint is not against a nation or race, but rather against those within it who called for Christ's crucifixion. We as Christians must not yield

to traditional anti-Semitic readings of biblical texts. The passage is speaking to all of us, just as God's love is for all of us, and the focus is on how we respond to the news of the gospel – what we do when we have heard it.

Psalm 116:1–4, 12–19 is traditionally recited by the Jewish people after eating the Passover lamb. The movement is from being or feeling close to death to offering thanksgiving for life and witnessing to others about what God has done.

The psalmist responds to God's answer to his call by giving thanks and witnessing to what God has done.

Those to whom the author of **1 Peter 1:17–23** writes have been born anew to life that lasts forever. As in the other readings for today, we see a movement towards life, this time through the death of Jesus. We can trust God because of the life of Jesus which gives us hope. This trust leads to our capacity for "genuine mutual love."

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Sometimes we might be so preoccupied with or angered by our own concerns or grief that we don't realize that God is amongst us. "God comes to us disguised as our life," writer Paula d'Arcy has said. God is always on the journey. We may spend years failing or refusing to recognize God, believing we are on a road of our own making. We can be blind to or ignore the signposts yet when we look back, we see – like the disciples en route to Emmaus – there is a God-presence all along our road.

When do we acknowledge, trust and celebrate those moments of recognition in communities of faith and experience genuine love for each other emerging?



Focus scripture
Luke 24:13–35

Additional scripture
Acts 2:14a, 36–41
Psalm 116:1–4, 12–19
1 Peter 1:17–23

**Always-present
God, open our
hearts and hands
to extend love
and grace to
those in need,
following the
example of Jesus
the Christ Amen.**

Lecture Connection
links current events
with this week's
scriptures. Go to www.seasonsonline.ca and
click on the link.

The Focus for Ages 5–12

Younger children in this age group are filled with curiosity. They are inquisitive and ask questions to learn more. Every day they make new discoveries about themselves, others, and the world around them. Older children are also eager to learn and put new information into context with what they know. Sometimes they discover new things when they thought they already knew everything about that person. Experiences like this can help group members connect with today's story as two travelling companions discover the "stranger" they are walking with is Jesus.

Children in the group who have been attending church for a while are beginning to be familiar with the sacrament of Eucharist/Communion. When you tell this week's biblical story, it is suggested you lift and break the bread in a way that will remind the children of the way that it is offered in your congregation. While the breaking of the bread in the story from Luke 24 is not the sacrament as we know it today, it can help children understand this same act is symbolic for people today. Pray for the children as they journey with the disciples on the road to Emmaus in an imaginative and revealing way.

Prepare

Before the session

- ❑ Read and prayerfully reflect on this week's focus scripture, Luke 24:13–35, and [biblical background material](#) (p. 67).
- ❑ Set a worship space with white, gold, or yellow cloth, candle, and Bible with bookmark placed in focus passage.
- ❑ Bring [basic supply kit](#) (p. 2) and, if possible, *Seasons Songbook* (Volume 9) and *Seasons Music CD* (Volume 9), and CD or MP3 player; downloadable sheet music and MP3 recordings are available at www.seasonsonline.ca.

Gather

- ❑ Bring a green plant in a pot and magazine pictures of well-known people.
- ❑ Bring, if possible, song, "As Long as We Follow/Na Nzela Na Lola" (p. 25 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 9; #17 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 9).

Engage

- ❑ Bring resource sheet "[Surprise Traveller](#)," cloth, plate, bread, and chalice.
- ❑ **Signing group:** hand signs from resource sheet "[Easter Resources](#)" (p. 119)
- ❑ **Drama group:** option: costumes (see resource sheet "[Bible-times Costumes](#)," p. 117)

Respond

Choose one or more of the following activities and bring materials to set up the chosen zones.

- ❑ **Easter zone:** communion ware used in your church, bread snack, grape juice, glasses; invite minister or elder to speak about the practice of Eucharist/Communion in your congregation.
- ❑ **Music zone:** song "Pass It On" (p. 26 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 9; #7 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 9)
- ❑ **Craft zone:** copies of resource sheet "[Glow Lights](#)," small jars, different colours of tissue paper, containers of white glue thinned with water, paintbrushes
- ❑ **Outreach zone:** denominational mission magazines, world map, slips of paper, pins or reusable adhesive
- ❑ **Quiet zone:** copies of resource sheet "[Revealing Message](#)"

Bless

- ❑ Bring, if possible, song "The Peace of the Earth" (p. 36 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 9; #10 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 9).



April 26, 2020

Breaking Bread

Scripture

Luke 24:13–35

FOCUS To learn more about Jesus from another story about the risen Christ

Gather

Welcome the children and remind them that we are in the Season of Easter. Invite them to share experiences from the past week.

Opening ritual

Gather in the worship space and lead the children in the ritual, inviting them to participate as indicated:

We light this candle to celebrate
the light of God's presence in our lives.

(Invite a child to light the candle.)

During the Easter season we celebrate
our new life in Christ.

(Invite a child to place the plant on the worship table.)

We are witnesses to God's love and light,
as we follow Jesus, the risen Christ.

All: Alleluia!

Sing or listen to, if possible, the song "As Long As We Follow/*Na Nzela Na Lola*" (p. 25 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 9; #17 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 9).

Pray this prayer or one of your own:

Loving God,
we know you are here with us.
May we grow in love
as we follow the ways of Jesus. Amen.

Receive the offering. Extinguish the candle to signal that the opening ritual has ended.

Connecting with the focus

Invite the children to study magazine pictures of well-known people, and try and guess who these people are. Ask:

- **How do we know who these people are?**
- **What helps us to recognize people?**

Explain that today we will hear a story about someone whom nobody recognized at first.

Engage

Preparing for the story

Invite a child to bring the Bible from the worship area and use the bookmark to open it to the gospel of Luke. Mention that there are four books in the New Testament called gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and they all include stories about Jesus and the people Jesus met. They are called "gospels" because that word means "good news."

Art engagement Remind children that during the past few weeks we have heard stories about Jesus' death on a cross and his coming alive in a new way. Recall last week's story from the gospel of John about Jesus suddenly appearing to the

disciples, who were hiding in a locked room (**John 20:1–18**). Explain that today we will hear a story about this same time, told in the gospel of Luke.

The Bible story

Use the resource sheet "[Surprise Traveller](#)" to tell the story based on **Luke 24:13–35**.

Wondering questions Use some or all of the following questions to wonder together:

- **Why do you think the two disciples didn't recognize Jesus at first?**
- **When did the disciples finally know the person with them was Jesus?**
- **What helped them to recognize Jesus?**

If necessary, remind children that before he was killed Jesus shared a meal with the disciples, and did something special with the bread and wine.

■ **What questions do you have about this story?**

Exploring the story further

(To enable the children to explore the scripture reading further, according to their interests and abilities, explain the two options and have each child select one.)

Signing group *(for younger children)* This group will have the opportunity to learn how to give a good news message about the resurrected Christ using their hands instead of their voices. Demonstrate the hand signs for "Jesus is with us, Alleluia!" (on p. 119). Then teach each word separately and practice until children have learned the whole phrase.

Drama group *(for older children)* This group will have the opportunity to dramatize the story. Invite children to put on costumes if desired (see resource sheet "[Bible-times Costumes](#)," p. 117). Form groups of three to act out the story, encouraging them to use their own words.

Reporting Invite the signing group to teach the rest of the group the hand signs for the phrase and invite three members of the drama group to share their re-enactment.

The Bible story and us

The disciples got to know Jesus better as they spent time with him. Invite children to think about what helps them to know more about Jesus. Take turns pantomiming these ideas without using words, for the rest of the group to guess.

■ **Who can help you to know more about Jesus? How?**

Respond

Invite the children to select a zone and work with the materials there.

❑ **Easter zone: Discussion** In the story from Luke, the disciples recognized Jesus as they shared bread together. Show the children the materials used in your congregation for the sacrament of Eucharist/Communion. Invite your guest to explain the practice in your congregation. Encourage conversation about the symbol and the mystery of sharing bread together in church today. Serve the bread and grape juice to the children.

❑ **Music zone: Singing the message** Followers of Jesus continue to share his message of love with others. Sometimes this can be done through music. Listen to or sing the first stanza of the song "Pass It On" (p. 26 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 9; #7 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 9). After singing this, ask children what words of Jesus they think we could pass on these days. After everyone has had an opportunity to contribute, sing the whole song, and then talk together about ways to pass the words, love, and peace of Jesus on.

❑ **Craft zone: Light holders** The light of God's love shone in Jesus' life and shines in ours too. Distribute copies of resource sheet "[Glow Lights](#)" and supplies and review the instructions together. Encourage children to make two light holders each, one for their families and one to share as gifts through pastoral care team visits.

❑ **Outreach zone: Sharing stories** When we tell one another stories about God's love alive in the world, we help each other recognize Jesus' ways of showing love. Share a story from a denominational mission magazine about God's love in action in another part of the world. Invite the children to find the place on a map. Distribute mission magazines and slips of paper. Invite children to work individually or in pairs to find a story, cut it out (or cut out an image from the story), write a short prayer for the people who are sharing and receiving God's love in that area, and attach these to that area of the map. If time permits, talk about what your congregation is doing to share God's love both locally and globally.

- ❑ **Quiet zone: Word puzzle** When Jesus broke the bread the disciples discovered that Jesus is alive in a new way. Distribute copies of the resource sheet "[Revealing Mes-](#)



sage" and invite the children to use the colour code to decipher the hidden message. (*Answer: Love lives on*) Use the questions as discussion starters as the children colour their pages.

Bless

Gather around the worship area, light the candle again, and invite children to spend a few moments in silence looking at the flame.

Sing if possible, the song "The Peace of the Earth" (p. 36 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 9; #10 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 9).

Pray Lead the children in the following simple breath prayer. Begin by breathing in and out, slowly and

deeply. Read each line slowly and quietly. Repeat the prayer several times.

As you breathe in, say silently, "Peace be..."

As you breathe out, say silently, "with you."

Then, as you breathe in, say silently, "Peace be..."

As you breathe out, say silently, "with me."

Blessing Offer the following blessing: "God's peace goes with you."

Reflect

How are the children deepening their relationship with Jesus? What new insights did the children gain today? Where did you see Jesus' love in their words and actions?



Surprise Traveller

based on Luke 24:13–35

Spread the cloth and place the bread and chalice on it deliberately so the children will connect this action with the sacrament of communion.

It was the first day of the week. Cleopas, a follower of Jesus, and another disciple, perhaps his wife, were on their way home. They were sad about Jesus and confused about what to do now that Jesus was gone.

They didn't say much as they walked along the dusty road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. But from time to time, one of them remembered something that Jesus had done or said and spoke of it. Or one of them said, "I can't believe what happened. I can't believe Jesus is no longer with us."

They paid attention to no one, but, nearing Emmaus, someone joined them. The stranger asked, "You look sad. What has happened to make you look like this?"

"Are you the only one in all Jerusalem who hasn't heard what happened there?" they asked.

"What do you mean?" asked the stranger.

The two followers of Jesus said, "About Jesus. Jesus was a prophet from God, who was powerful in word and action. But Jesus was betrayed and arrested. After a trial, Jesus was sentenced to death. That happened three days ago. Some say Jesus is alive, but we haven't seen Jesus. So to us, Jesus is dead."

When the two followers finished, the stranger said, "How long it takes for people to understand what has happened." Then he told them all about Moses and the prophets of old. He explained them in new ways.

When they came to the village of Emmaus, they said to the stranger walking with them, "It is getting late. Please stay with us tonight."

The three of them went into the house. They sat down and ate together. (*Spread the cloth. Slowly set the chalice and plate of bread on it.*) The stranger picked up the bread and broke it in half (*break the bread*). When he handed it to Cleopas and the other follower, they were surprised. The stranger on the road was Jesus! But at that moment, Jesus was gone.

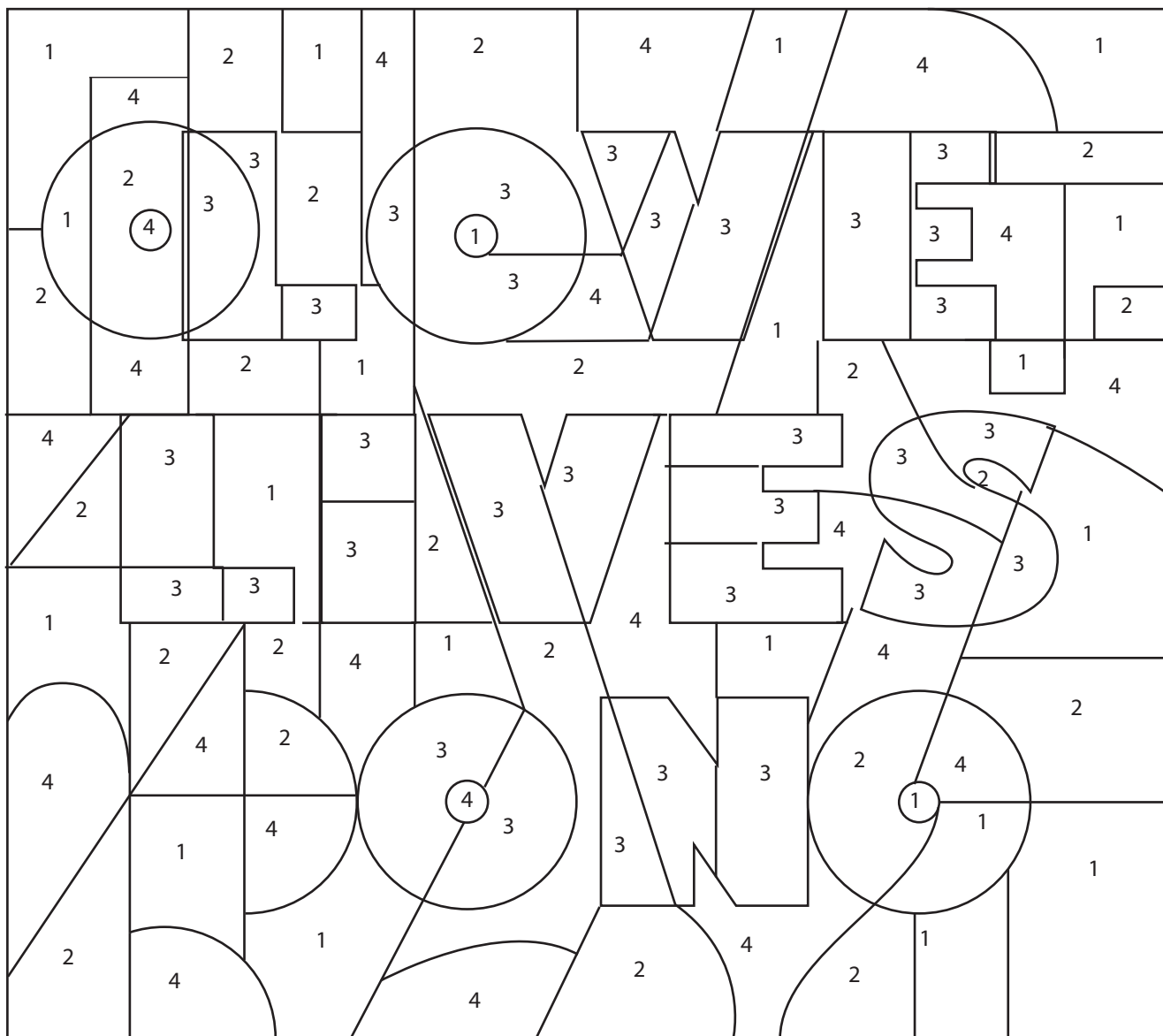
"We should have known," said Cleopas. "Weren't we amazed at what he told us on the road?"

Even though it was getting dark, the two followers hurried to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples what had happened.



Revealing Message

Use the code below to reveal the discovery the disciples made when the visitor broke bread and gave it to them.



Secret code:

- 1 - green
- 2 - blue
- 3 - yellow
- 4 - red

Questions to ponder:

- Where do you see signs of God's love in the world?
- How do you show love to creation and other people?



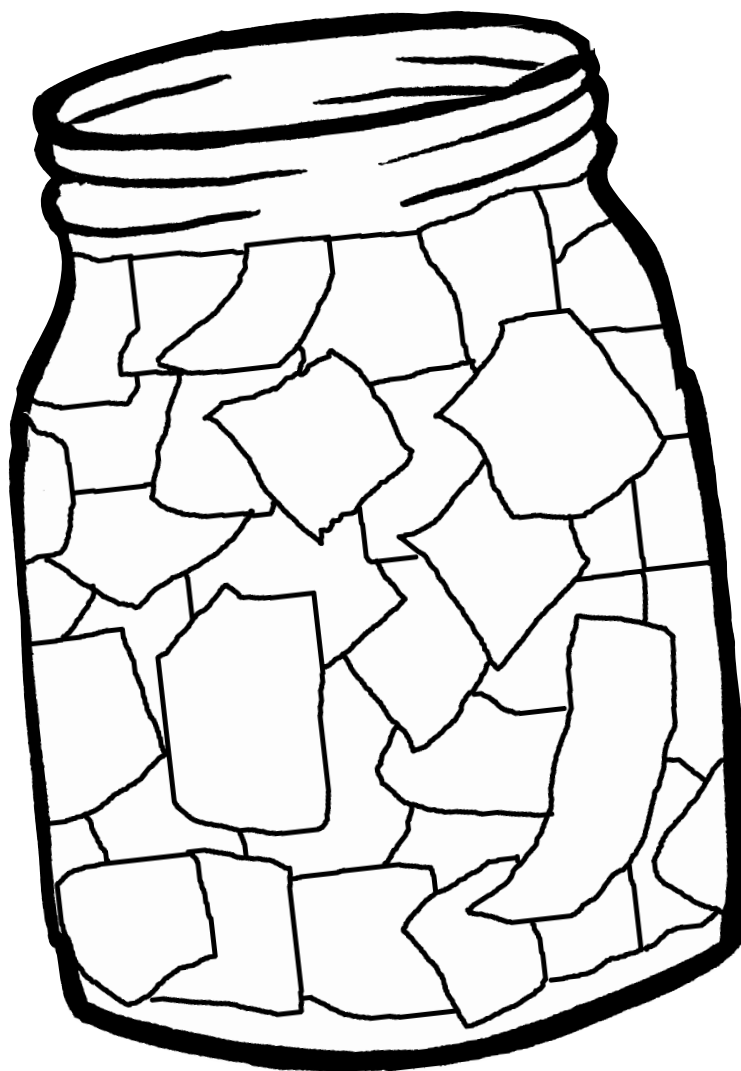
Glow Lights

Materials

- ☐ Tissue paper (variety of colours)
- ☐ White glue
- ☐ Clean paintbrushes
- ☐ Small glass jars
- ☐ Tealights

Directions

1. Tear the tissue paper into small pieces.
2. Mix 25 ml/2 tbsp white glue and 10 ml/2 tsp water together in a small container. Prepare enough containers that each child will have one.
3. Brush a light coating of the glue mixture onto a small section of the jar.
4. Put pieces of tissue paper on the glued area. Overlap them slightly. Smooth them down with the wet paintbrush. Continue with these steps until the jar is covered.
5. Let it dry. Set a tealight in the jar.



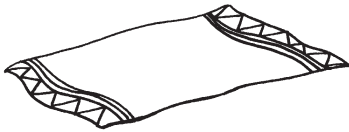
Bible-times Costumes

Any time you want to add a touch of drama to telling or listening to a story, provide costumes for the storyteller, the actors, or the audience. Here are some ideas to have on hand for any story or session.

Simple tunic

Fold a length of fabric in half. Cut a half circle in the fold, large enough to fit over the head. Hold the tunic together with a sash. Make several sizes of these tunics so you can outfit children and adults.

Complete the costume with a headdress and a length of fabric for a cape.



Headdress

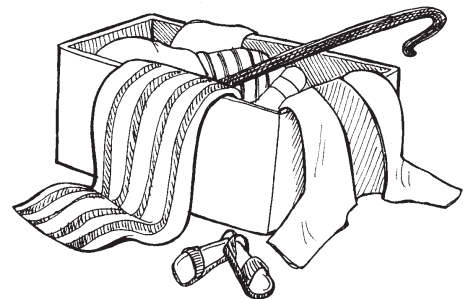
Cut white cloth into rectangles long enough to drape over the head of a child or adult. Hold the headdress in place with an elastic headband or a ribbon. Other colours can be used as well.

To create a headdress for a woman, use a longer length of fabric so the headdress can be draped over the shoulders, covering more of the woman's head.

To create a costume for nobility, simply use fancier fabric. Old drapes, often found in secondhand shops or garage sales, are great. Take any cords used as tiebacks, too.

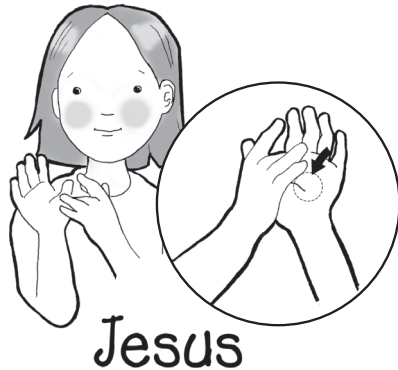
Props

A simple prop can add just the touch needed to distinguish the actor. A bag of gold coins for a tax collector, a shepherd's crook, or a wooden bowl or spoon can set the tone quickly.



Easter Resources

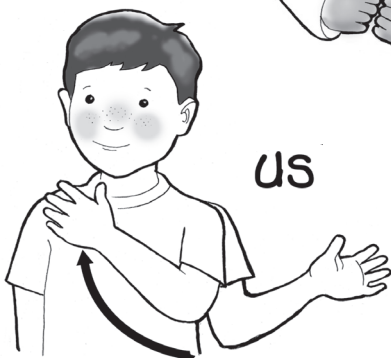
Hand signs



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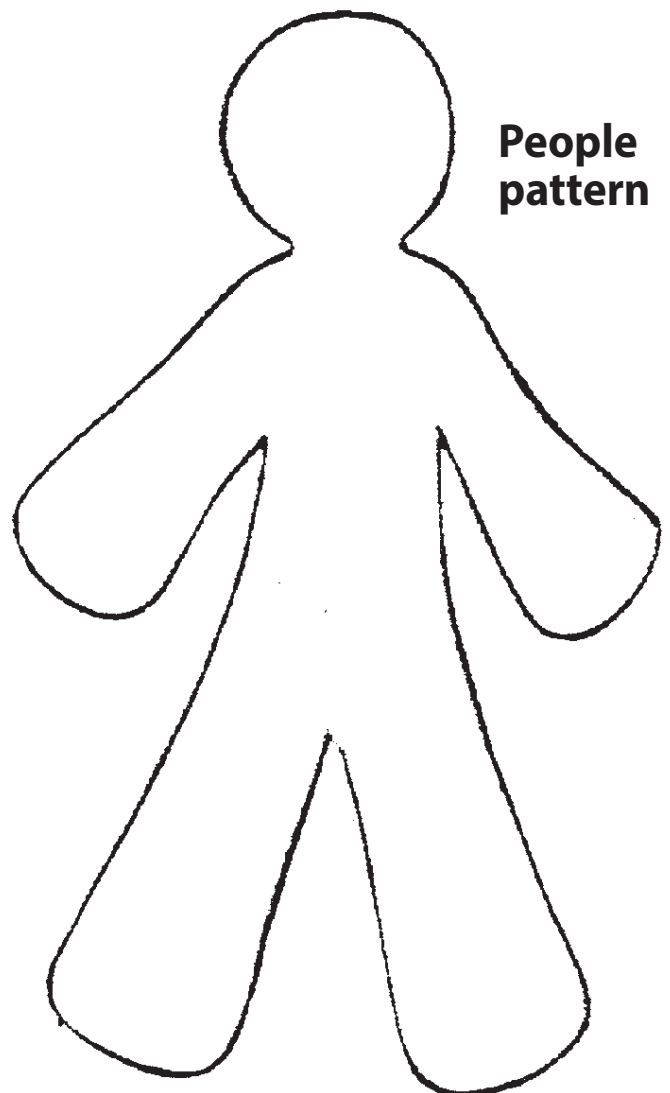


us



alleluia

People
pattern



Badge
pattern

Thank you
for sharing
God's love

