

Walking the road to Emmaus with your family in media culture....
(Luke 24:13-35)

remember! daily life / encounters with strangers / rituals and practices

daily life

- watch tv together, not alone
- ask questions of faith – where is God in this story? how are people acting in relation to each other? (even if the show has nothing explicitly religious in it)
- share the task of choosing what to watch *with* your children, respect their choices and expect them to do the same with yours (which might require encouragement!)
- go beyond mass media – look for alternative media, international DVD's, locally produced shows, and so on
- give kids room to ask questions, and then listen carefully to what might be religious resonances that you can lift up (where is love present, how is care demonstrated, how is sin represented, and so on)
- if you have the resources, choose DSL or cable internet instead of broadcast television
- consider listening to recorded music during daily commutes and meal preparation, instead of live radio; or choose podcasts that respect your commitments
- have your kids tell you stories that build on the stories they've seen in media (for example, if they love Scooby Doo, have them tell a new story starring Scooby Doo)
- tell stories that put characters your kids love in religious situations (take SpongeBob SquarePants to church, build a church from Legos, have Spiderman meet Jesus, etc.)

engaging the stranger and that from which we are estranged

- listen respectfully to your kids' media choices (even if they're teenagers and you feel revulsion at first!), you might still decide that they're not appropriate choices and then you can explain your decision, but begin with respect
- let your own religious questions be heard, don't hide your doubts!
- search out stories of those who are marginalized in popular mass mediated culture
- deconstruct the news – and then reconstruct it, especially locally!
- risk your own stories by listening to others (that is, embrace conversation rather than fear contact with other religious perspectives)
- provide multiple opportunities for children to take the lead in serving others

build media into your rituals, and create new rituals with your media

- do a screen fast for Lent (that is, put away the TV/computer for the 40 days) [or if that's too hard, just for the Triduum]
- add music to a dinner prayer (this should include adding so-called "secular" recorded music that resonates with your prayer concerns)
- make a point of muting television commercials and use the time as an opportunity to ask questions about the shows you're watching
- learn how to make video recordings and have your kids interview each other and friends/neighbors about religious questions
- add videos with explicit religious themes to your typical video watching practices
- incorporate blessings into daily practices (cf. Paulsell or Yust) – bless a child as they're getting dressed, etc.

The *Emmaus* story is found in the last chapter of *Luke*:

Now that very same day two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. And it happened that as they were talking together and discussing it, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.

He said to them, ‘What are all these things that you are discussing as you walk along?’ They stopped, their faces downcast.

Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, ‘You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.’ He asked, ‘What things?’ They answered, ‘All about Jesus of Nazareth, who showed himself a prophet powerful in action and speech before God and the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have now gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they could not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.’

Then he said to them, ‘You foolish men!’ So slow to believe all that the prophets have said! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer before entering into his glory?’ Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself.

When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them saying, ‘It is nearly evening, and the day is almost over.’ So he went in to stay with them.

Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, ‘Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?’

They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, ‘The Lord has indeed risen and has appeared to Simon.’ Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognized him at the breaking of the bread.¹

¹ Luke 24:13-35. Taken from the *New Jerusalem Bible*.