



Session 4: RESURRECTED
Suggested Week of Use: March 27, 2016
Core Passages: Luke 24:1-12

News Story Summary

Earlier this month, the New York Times carried a story about a weekly Tuesday meeting at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan. Rev. Craig Ellis welcomes skeptics to the WS Cafe, “a space for people who consider themselves non-Christian and are coming in from the outside.” The church recognizes that in America today, the number of people who do not identify themselves with any religion is on the rise. A study last year by the Pew Research Center found that 23 percent of respondents identified themselves as “nones” —meaning atheistic, agnostic, or religiously unaffiliated.

For more on this story, enter the phrase “Evangelists Adapt to a New Era, Preaching the Gospel to Skeptics” in your search engine.)

Focus Attention

Before group members arrive, write, “SEEING IS BELIEVING” on a whiteboard or large piece of paper. As group settles in, ask them to respond to this statement. Prompt response with the following questions if needed: Would you consider yourself to be a skeptic? In what situations are they more likely to require to see “proof” before you believe something? What kind of proof would you need?

Share details from the news story about the church in New York that is reaching out to skeptics. Ask: *What challenges do you think leaders have when engaging avowed skeptics?* Allow for responses, then share that in today’s passage of Scripture, we will encounter a group of people who were extremely skeptical about whether or not Jesus had actually been resurrected from the dead. However, the identity of this group of people might surprise you.

Challenge

Note the irony that Jesus’ own disciples at first did not believe the message the women who had visited the tomb brought back to them (Luke 24:11), Emphasize the need for believers to seek to help skeptics understand the gospel. Refer back to the news story about the church in Manhattan. Ask: *How can we create safe spaces for those coming in from the outside to have their questions answered?* Challenge your group to commit to showing the love of Jesus to those for whom “seeing is believing.”