

## Morning Overview

### Lesson: Christ's Ascension

#### Lesson Objective:

In our lesson today, we learn and celebrate the ascension of Jesus. This is a moment in the church calendar where we can look to the significance of Christ returning to Heaven and sitting at the Father's right hand. The significance is several fold: (1) The incarnated Christ, fully human and fully God, is in Heaven; and this shows our own destination in that our humanity will one day be in the presence of God, fully redeemed and glorified; (2) Jesus promises that He will come again to make all things right; (3) Jesus ascends to Heaven to rule and to intercede for His people; and (4) God's people are given a Helper, the Holy Spirit, to empower them to be witnesses to the Resurrected Christ. The Holy Spirit could only come once the Son of God had departed. An often-forgotten part of the Christian calendar, today we celebrate that Jesus sits at the Father's right hand ruling and interceding for us, His people.

#### Teaching Summary:

- God's promises do not change despite circumstances, people and even our inability to believe them. God keeps His promises even when we do not trust Him or follow His commands.
- For many, many years God's people expected the Promised One – a King – to come and make all things right.
- Jesus instructs His disciples to meet Him in Galilee. This will be the final time Jesus meets with His disciples before He leaves the earth.
- Jesus gives some very specific instructions to His disciples and a few promises too.
- Jesus commands His disciples to go throughout the world telling everyone the Good News, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that Jesus had commanded the disciples.
- Jesus promised that His disciples would not be alone and would have help. Help would come from the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus then ascends into Heaven. As He ascends, two angels come to the disciples and exhort the disciples that Jesus is gone but will come back again.

**Scripture:** Acts 1:1-11; Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:45-49; John 20:21-23

**Story:** Vos Children's Bible, Pages 331-332; Gospel Story Bible, Pages 242-243; The Beginner's Bible, Pages 496-499; Jesus Storybook Bible, Pages 318-325.

**Scripture Memory for June:** Acts 26:17b-18 (ESV)

**I am sending you** (*point up to God and then to yourself*)

**to open their eyes** (*close your eyes with hands closed beside them then open hands wide as you open your eyes*)

**so that they may turn from darkness to light** (*turn around and lower your head covering it with your arms and then face the front again raising arms, lifting your hands to the light*)

**... that they may receive forgiveness of sins.** (*open wide your hands out in front of you*)

**Craft:** Jesus' Ascension

**Supplies:** Jesus scene, craft stick, cloud, glue, verse sticker, crayons/markers

**Instructions:** 1. Color Jesus scene

2. Tape Jesus scene to end of craft stick.

3. Attach verse sticker to top of cloud.

4. Slide Jesus scene into slit in cloud to show Jesus ascending into the clouds.



If child has already done craft first hour, have them work on a coloring sheet.

## Story

### Transition

Boys and girls, if you left for a journey or trip, would you pack a bag or suitcase? [Yes] What would you take with you? [Allow time for answers] In our story today Jesus goes on a journey, but this journey is special, and He doesn't pack a bag. Let's find out in our story where Jesus is going...

### Forty Days and Five Hundred People

Many people had seen Jesus after He had risen from the dead. They touched His scars, poked Him, saw Him eat food, and even walked and talked with Him. There was no question in anyone's mind that Jesus was really alive! Jesus did all of this for forty (40) days after He rose from the dead. During this time after Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to more than five hundred people (1 Corinthians 15:6)! Jesus had told His disciples at one point, "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. And trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house. I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a place for you. After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you to be with me so that you may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going (John 14:1-4)." It was time for Jesus to return to Heaven to be with the Father. God's plan was not for Jesus to stay here on earth.

Before Jesus would leave, the Bible tells us He spoke to the disciples about the kingdom of God.

### The Great Commission

Jesus commanded his eleven disciples to meet him in Galilee. The disciples came to a mountain where they saw Jesus and worshipped Him. Jesus gathered His disciples together and said very, very important things.

"All power in heaven and on earth is given to me." Jesus had received all power from His Father in Heaven, and now He was telling His disciples where to go and what to do. What kind of power? It was the power to send His disciples out and that the Good News they would tell others would be heard and believed.

What was the Good News? Jesus told the disciples, "Tell the Good News to everyone. It is written that the Christ would be killed and rise from death on the third day. You saw these things happen—you are witnesses. People's lives will be changed by hearing the Good News! If they believe these things and turn to Jesus, their sins will be forgiven. Teach them to obey everything that I have told you." Other people in the world had never heard of Jesus; they did not hear about His crucifixion or His resurrection. They did not have a relationship with God at all! Jesus wanted people to hear this Good News!

But where would they go to tell the Good News?

Jesus said to the disciples: "Go everywhere in the world and make followers of all people!" Jesus wanted everyone to hear the Good News. However, Jesus wanted the disciples to start telling people in Jerusalem first. And the disciples could not leave Jerusalem until a Special Helper came. The Special Helper would be the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would come after Jesus went away. Jesus had told them that it was good for them if He went away because then the Holy Spirit would come and live inside of His followers. Jesus had promised that the Holy Spirit would never leave God's people, but the Holy Spirit would always be with them.

Not only would the disciples tell everyone the Good News, but Jesus commanded the disciples to baptize everyone in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Some of the last words we have from Jesus to His disciples were, "You can be sure that I will be with you always. I will continue with you until the end of the world." As the disciples go out into the world telling everyone about Jesus, Jesus wanted them to know they would never be alone. This is a great promise and comfort as we go out and tell others about Jesus!

### **Christ Goes Back to Heaven**

Before He left to go back to Heaven, Jesus told the disciples not to leave Jerusalem. Jesus said, “The Father has made you a promise which I told you about before. Wait here to receive this Promise.” The Promise Jesus spoke about was the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was going to come and be with the disciples and help them tell the Good News all over the world. The Holy Spirit would always be with the disciples, so they would know God was always with them.

The disciples asked Jesus, “Lord, are you at this time going to give the kingdom back to Israel?” This was a confusing time for the disciples. The disciples thought that Jesus was going to get rid of all of Israel’s enemies and make it a great kingdom again. The disciples saw Jesus alive and no longer dead. If Jesus can defeat death, who could stop Jesus? The answer was no one and not one thing. But this was not God’s plan for Jesus to conquer Israel’s enemy and give the kingdom back to Israel. Jesus told the disciples that it was for the Father to decide when that would happen. Jesus then said, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Jesus reminded the disciples they were His witnesses and what they saw was incredible – He rose from the dead! And the disciples were to go throughout the world telling others what they saw.

After Jesus said this, as the disciples were watching, Jesus was lifted up. A cloud hid him from their sight. As Jesus was going, the disciples were looking into the sky. Suddenly two men wearing white clothes stood beside them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? You saw Jesus taken away from you into heaven. He will come back in the same way you saw him go.”

### **Questions for Review**

Have children answer “yes” or “no.”

- After Jesus rose from the dead, He stayed on earth for 100 days. (No! Only 40 days.)
- Only 3 people saw Jesus after He rose from the dead. (No! 500 people saw Jesus alive!)
- Jesus told His disciples to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the Helper to come. (Yes)
- Jesus promised His disciples the Helper – another name for the Holy Spirit – would come to them. (Yes)
- Jesus told the disciples once they received the Holy Spirit they would go to Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Yes)
- The disciples would tell those they meet about Jesus – Him dying on the cross and being raised back to life. (Yes)
- Jesus promised the disciples that He would always be with them to the end of time. (Yes)