

Morning Overview

Lesson: *Great Commission & Christ's Ascension*

Lesson Objective:

In today's lesson we learn about the Great Commission and Christ's Ascension. We want children to hear and understand that Jesus commanded His disciples to go throughout the world, sharing the Good News, baptizing in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching everyone to obey what Jesus taught. This is not possible by our own human ability, in fact it would fail. Jesus promised that once He left and ascended back to Heaven, the Holy Spirit, would come. The Holy Spirit is sent to empower Christ's disciples to share the Good News and to be with them as they go everywhere as witnesses to Christ's life, death and resurrection. Today's lesson is the basis for our year of exploring the spread of the Gospel, the missionary journeys of Paul, and the building of the Church by the Holy Spirit.

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 240-243; The Beginner's Bible, pages 496-499; Jesus Storybook Bible, pages 318-325.

Scripture Memory for August:

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. (Acts 1:8)

Opening Activity:

Relay of the Day: Teach Acts 1:8 motions to the children

But you will receive power - **make strong arms**

when the Holy Spirit has come upon you - **make the wings of a bird with your hands by attaching your thumbs and fluttering your fingers from above your head down to your rest over your heart**

and you will be my witnesses - **raise your right hand like you are swearing in and then open and close your hand as if you were making a puppet speak**

in Jerusalem - **make a small circle with your hand around your heart**

and in all Judea - **make a larger circle around your heart**

and Samaria, - **make a big circle over your head**

and to the end of the earth. - **open your arms and turn around**

Craft: Target

Supplies: White wooden circle, foam circles (black, blue, red), foam heart, verse label, magnet, glue

Instructions: 1. Glue 1 circle of each color (black, blue, red) to wooden circle and end with yellow heart.
2. Attach verse label to back and then add magnet.



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 Cor 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 come. 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, “The Holy Spirit will come to you in Jerusalem. Then you will receive power. You will be my witnesses—in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world.” Jesus reminded the disciples that 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.”