

Jesus' Ascension

(Luke 24:36-43; Acts 1:3-11)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Have you ever waited anxiously for something to happen? Did someone promise to take you somewhere? Perhaps you know the anticipation of waiting for your birthday or for Christmas? How does it feel to anticipate a wonderful experience that you can barely stand to wait for? [Teacher, let the children discuss.]

Jesus has promised that He's going to come back to get us! What an exciting day that will be! In the same way we anticipate our birthday, we should be anxiously expecting Him at any moment!

Opening Prayer

Father, it is a thrill to think that Jesus is coming back to get us. I can't wait to see Heaven! I know it must be such a wonderful place. I'm so excited to see You, too. And, I'm excited also this morning to learn more about Your ascension into heaven and Your promise to return. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. (1 John 2:28)

Lesson

For the past few Sundays we've been learning about the last week of Jesus' life. Last week we discussed His resurrection from the dead.

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared at different times to His disciples. These had been the most exciting days of the disciples' lives! Their beloved Master, the Lord Jesus, had risen from the dead! There could be no doubt that He was alive!

Acts 1:3

During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.

The Lord Jesus had been nailed to a cross to die a painful death. He gave His life because He was taking the punishment for your sin. God says everyone has sinned — including you and me — and the wages of sin is death (Romans 3:23; 6:23a). Jesus was sinless in every way; He did not deserve to die. In His great love for you, Jesus suffered so that you can be forgiven of your sin. (1 Corinthians 15:3b, 4.) But now, Jesus was alive again! When the disciples realized Jesus had risen from the dead, they were excited!

For forty days, the disciples talked with Him, ate with Him, and in His hands and feet they saw the scars where nails had held Him on the cross.

Luke 24:36-43

And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. "Peace be with you," he said. (37) But the whole group was startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost! (38) "Why are you frightened?" he asked. "Why are your hearts filled with doubt? (39) Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do." (40) As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet. (41) Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" (42) They gave him a piece of broiled fish, (43) and he ate it as they watched.

Acts 1:4-5

Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. (5) John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Before receiving the Holy Spirit, the disciples were still confused about what was going on.

Acts 1:6-7

So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?" (7) He replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know."

They still thought Jesus was going to free Israel from Roman power and then become their earthly king.

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Jesus was reminding them that He had to go back to the Father so that the Holy Spirit could come to live in them to help them and to teach them. [Teacher, see also John 14:17, 26; 16:7] There is only one God, but He is three persons. He is a three-part God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. You can think of it like water which can be ice or steam or liquid.

If Jesus had stayed on earth, his physical presence would have limited the spread of the gospel, because physically he could be in only one place at a time. After Jesus was taken up into heaven, he was spiritually present everywhere through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit gives us comfort, guides us into all truth, reminds us of God's word, gives us the right words to say to others, and fills us with power.

The power from the Holy Spirit gives us courage, boldness, confidence, insight, ability, and authority. If you believe in Jesus, you can experience the power of the Holy Spirit in your life.

As He finished speaking, Jesus went up into the air, right before their eyes!

Acts 1:9

After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him.

Imagine the disciple's amazement when Jesus disappeared into the sky! He was gone! Even though He had told them He was going, they didn't feel ready to see Him leave. Perhaps they had forgotten that He'd promised to come back again.

Jesus will come back suddenly and without warning! It could be during your lifetime. It could be anytime. If you have received Jesus and have become a child of God, you will live with Him forever in heaven!

Will you be glad to see Him when He returns? God wants us to live close to Him so that when He appears, we may not be ashamed before Him at His coming. [Teacher, review the Memory Verse.]

What are some things you don't want to be caught doing when Jesus returns? [Teacher, let the kids discuss this topic: Skipping school, vandalizing cars, cheating on your homework, stealing a bike, smoking.]

Jesus could return at any time. When He does, will you be ready for His return? The disciples were amazed when they saw Jesus go up, think how surprising it will be when He comes back!

After the cloud hid Him from sight, the disciples stared at the sky.

Acts 1:9-11

After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. (10) As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. (11) "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!"

Two angels appeared, standing right there beside them!

Jesus is coming back again from heaven in a cloud. Although no one except God knows when this will take place, we do know that God always keeps His promises.

Each day remind yourself that today could be the day of His glorious appearing! In everything you do, ask yourself, "*Is this what I want Jesus to find me doing when He comes back?*" When you are tempted to think or say or do anything that you know is not pleasing to the Lord, ask the Holy Spirit to give you the strength to say, "*No!*"

Jesus is coming back and He wants us to be ready so that we'll be happy to see Him.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, You are coming soon. Am I doing what You want me to do? We want to be pleasing to You in everything that we think, say, and do. Help us to call upon the power of the Holy Spirit to say, "*No!*" to sin and to continue to live close to You every day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Cloud Cards: Prepare a cloud-shaped card for each student. On it print in large letters: "**Perhaps today!**" Add 1 John 2:28 in smaller print below the two words. This card could be small enough to be set up "tent style" on a table or large enough to hang on the wall. Encourage the children to use it each day as a reminder of Christ's return so they will choose behavior that would please Him.

Game Center

Heaven Concentration: Prepare 16 identical white clouds for the flannel board or tacky board. On the back, write one of the following messages; use each message twice:

- God is powerful
- No more death
- No crying there
- A city of pure gold
- No night there
- No pain there
- A river clear as crystal
- 12 Gates, each one pearl

Ask a review question, and the child that answers tries to find two matching statements about Heaven. If the pieces match, remove them. If not, replace them and ask the next question. Or, use the following review questions in another game of your choice.

1. Why was the Lord Jesus nailed to a cross? (He gave His life because He was taking the punishment for my sins.)
2. How did the disciples feel when they realized Jesus had risen from the dead? (They were excited!)
3. How many days did Jesus walk on earth between His resurrection and His ascension? (Forty days.)
4. What did Jesus do with His disciples after He rose from the dead? (He talked and ate with them.)

5. At first they were terrified and frightened and thought He was a ghost. How did He convince them it really was Him? (He showed them his hands and feet and let them touch Him. Finally he asked for food.)
6. Why did the disciples ask Jesus, "*Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*" (They still thought Jesus was going to free Israel from Roman power and become their king.)
7. What did Jesus tell the disciples they would receive when the Holy Spirit came? (Power.)
8. Explain the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (There is only one God, but He is three persons. Like the three states of water.)
9. Why was it necessary for Jesus to go back to the Father? (So the Holy Spirit could come. Because Jesus is physical, He could only be in one place at a time. The Holy Spirit can be everywhere at once.)
10. Why is it good to have the power of the Holy Spirit? (He gives us courage, boldness, confidence, insight, ability, and authority.)
11. How did Jesus go up into Heaven? (A cloud received Him out of their sight.)
12. When will Jesus come back? (Only God knows the exact time; but it could be any time.)
13. What do you want to be caught doing when Jesus returns? (Something good!)
14. What's an important thing to remind yourself each day? (That this could be the day of His glorious appearing!)