

Jesus' Ascension

(Acts 1:3-11)

Introduction

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, dear children, remain in fellowship with Christ so that when He returns, you will be full of courage and not shrink back from Him in shame. (1 John 2:28 NLT)

Lesson

For the past few Sundays we've been learning about the 40 days after Jesus rose from the dead and before He went back up to heaven. During that time Jesus appeared at different times to His disciples. These had been the most exciting days of the disciples' lives! Their beloved Friend, the Lord Jesus, had risen from the dead! There could be no doubt that He was alive!

Acts 1:3

He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

How did Jesus prove to His disciples He came back to life? [Lead the children in a review of His various appearances.]

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.

Acts 1:4-5

And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; (5) for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

The disciples were confused about what Jesus was talking about.

Acts 1:6-7

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (7) He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority."

The disciples were still hoping that Jesus was going to become their earthly king and free Israel from Roman power.

Acts 1:8

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 was telling them that He was not going to set up His kingdom on earth now. He had to go back to the Father in heaven so that the Holy Spirit could come to help them and to teach them. [Teacher, see also John 14:16-17, 26; 16:7-8, 13-15]

There is only one God, but He is a three-part God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. You can think of it like the

corner of the ceiling: there is a wall, another wall, and a ceiling that make up one "corner".

If Jesus had stayed on earth as a human, he could only be in one place at a time. The Holy Spirit can be present everywhere because He is a spirit so He can help everyone all at the same time.

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 the power to live our lives in a way that pleases God. The power of the Holy Spirit gives us the courage to say "No!" to sin, and "Yes!" to God's way of thinking and acting. If you believe in Jesus, you have the power of the Holy Spirit in your life right now!

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

Acts 1:9

And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

Imagine the disciple's shock when they saw Jesus going up into the clouds alive! Suddenly 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 had 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 asked Jesus to come into your life, you have become a child of God and someday you will live with Him forever in heaven!

Will you be glad to see Him when He returns? God wants us to stay in fellowship with Him so that when He comes, we will not be ashamed of ourselves. [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: disobeying your dad, being rude to your mother, cheating in a game or on a test at school, being angry with your brother or sister, saying a bad word.]

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 1:10-11

And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, (11) and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Who were these two men in white robes? (Angels)

Two angels appeared, standing right there beside them and told them Jesus will come 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 return! 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. I want You to catch me doing something good. 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 become their king and free Israel from Roman power.)
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!)

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