

Jesus Ascended to Heaven

BIBLE PASSAGE: Acts 1:4-14

MAIN POINT: Jesus ascended to heaven in a cloud.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus showed His followers that He is alive. He taught them about Himself and about God's kingdom. (Luke 24:25-27,44-48) Jesus told them that He would soon return to the Father. (John 20:17)

Jesus directed the Eleven to go a mountain. When they arrived, Jesus appeared. Some of them wondered if Jesus was finally going to overthrow the Roman government and set up His kingdom on earth.

Jesus said, "It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive

power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:7-8).

Jesus told them to remain in Jerusalem until they received the Father’s promise—the Holy Spirit. Those who repented of their sins and trusted in Jesus’ death and resurrection would be baptized by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:5) The Holy Spirit would give them power to live holy lives and take the gospel to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

After Jesus told the disciples these things, Jesus was taken up into the sky—right in front of their eyes! (Acts 1:9) Suddenly two men stood on the mountain next to the disciples. “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven?” they asked. They said Jesus would return the same way. (Acts 1:11)

Jesus is alive in heaven, waiting to return for His people. Jesus told the disciples He was going to prepare a place for them, and when we die, we will be with the Lord. (John 14:1-3) In the meantime, Jesus has not left us alone. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with us and help us do God’s work. One day, Jesus will return to make all things new and to rule as Lord over all.



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The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

Jesus Ascended to Heaven

Acts 1:4-14

• **Change posture:**

Move your body as you tell the story. Begin sitting. During dialogue, turn one direction when the disciples speak and another direction as Jesus speaks. Stand as you tell about Jesus' ascension and the two men who appeared.

• **Use lighting**

effects: Begin telling the story with the lights dimmed and a spotlight on the Bible story picture. Raise the lights completely as you conclude the story.

After Jesus died on the cross and was raised from the dead, He spent time with His disciples over 40 days. Now, Jesus gave His disciples important instructions. He told them not to leave the city of Jerusalem. Jesus said the disciples should wait there until God kept His promise to give them the Holy Spirit.

Jesus reminded the disciples of John the Baptist. John had baptized people with water when they turned away from their sin and turned to God. **Jesus said that in a few days, the disciples would be baptized too. Not with water, but with the Holy Spirit.**

“Lord, are You giving the kingdom back to Israel now?” the disciples asked. God was with His people—the Jews—but they looked weak. The Romans ruled over them. The Jewish people wanted to have power over other nations.

Jesus did not say yes, but He did not say no. “The Father knows when the time is right,” He said. Then **Jesus said, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you. You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

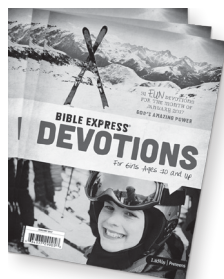
As Jesus' witnesses, the disciples would tell people what they knew to be true. They would tell people the good news about Jesus in the city of Jerusalem, in the surrounding area of Judea and the nearby area of Samaria, and all over the world. The Holy Spirit would be with them to help them.

After Jesus said these things, He went up into heaven. The disciples watched Jesus until a cloud hid Him from their sight. All of a sudden, two men appeared. The men were wearing white clothes. These men asked the

disciples, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come again. He will return in the same way that you have seen Him going into heaven.”

Then they returned to Jerusalem, as Jesus had instructed them, to pray and wait.

Christ Connection: Jesus left earth and returned to heaven, but He did not leave us alone. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with us and help us do God’s work. One day, Jesus will return to make all things new and to rule as Lord over all.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD’S WORD?
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Invite kids to check out this week’s devotionals to discover how God’s Word can help them grow in the gospel. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Introduce the STORY

SESSION TITLE: Jesus Ascended to Heaven

BIBLE PASSAGE: Acts 1:4-14

MAIN POINT: Jesus ascended to heaven in a cloud.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to tell about a time they had to say goodbye to a friend who was moving or a parent who was going on a trip. What did they say? How did they feel?

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Ascension Maze” on the activity page.

- “Ascension Maze” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

SAY • Who is pictured in the maze? (*Jesus and His disciples*)
Jesus’ disciples are looking up into the sky at Jesus.
That’s strange. Let’s find out what happened.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Is it time?

Direct kids to stand in a circle. Begin the game by saying, “I’m [*your name*], and it’s time to” Finish the sentence with an action that begins with the same letter as your name. For example, “I’m Cathy, and it’s time to clap!”

Then lead kids in a round of applause. Invite the player



LOW PREP

to your left to go next. Example: “I’m Sean, and it’s time to spin.” If a kid struggles to think of an action, encourage the other kids to help. Perhaps he may suggest an action that matches the first letter of his last name.

Allow kids to be creative with their ideas. Continue around the circle until everyone has a turn to lead.

(Suggested actions: awaken, bow, crawl, duck, exercise, jump, kick, leap, march, run, stomp)

SAY • When Jesus’ disciples met with Him in the Bible story we will hear today, they asked Him if it was time for Him to set up His kingdom. We will hear what He told them.

OPTION 2: Categories quiz

Give each kid a pencil and a copy of the “Categories” printable. Explain that when you say “go,” kids should fill out List #1 with answers that begin with the same letter.

Announce that the first round’s letter is *J*, and then say, “Go!” Allow a minute for kids to write their answers. Then call time. All players must immediately stop writing. Call on kids, in turn, to read their answers. If no other players wrote the same answer, a kid should circle his answer.

If someone else wrote the same answer, he should cross out the answer. Continue until each kid has shared her list. Award one point for each circled answer.

SAY • That last category was tricky: something you might see in the sky. Did anyone write down *Jesus*? In today’s Bible story, Jesus’ disciples saw Jesus in the sky. How strange! We’re going to find out what happened.

- “Categories” printable, 1 per kid
- pencils
- timer (optional)

Option: If time remains, play again with another letter.

Transition to teach the story

Teach the STORY

SESSION TITLE: Jesus Ascended to Heaven

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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.

Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire
• binoculars
• Bible

[Leader enters carrying a Bible and binoculars. Leader is wearing a hat labeled Go and Tell!]

LEADER • Hi! I am so glad to see you again. In case you forgot, my name is *[your name]*. We are in the middle of a campaign called “Go and Tell!”

In fact, I brought my binoculars because I am hoping to catch a glimpse of the giant aerial banner I ordered. Have you ever seen an airplane dragging a giant banner behind it? I thought it would be a good idea to get one of those that says *Jesus is alive!* Then everyone would know that Jesus is alive.

If you were going to put a message on a big banner, what would your message say? *[Allow kids to respond.]*

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Those are some great ideas. Now, if any of you are wondering why we are doing this, I think our

big picture question and answer might help clear that up. Here it is. I will ask the question, and you answer: *What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.* There you have it! Jesus wants us to go and tell others about Him. That seems like a really big job, and it is! But we have help. That's what we will find out about today.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline or big story circle.

LEADER • We've been hearing about all the people who saw Jesus after He rose from the dead. Jesus is alive! But He isn't on earth today, so where is He? Today's Bible story will show us where Jesus went.

This story comes from the Book of Acts. The Book of Acts is about the beginning of the early church. Luke wrote about Jesus' ascension and the things that happened for 30 years afterward. Let's hear it.

- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Acts 1:4-14. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus Ascended to Heaven."

LEADER • Jesus went home to heaven. Do you remember how Jesus' life on earth started? God sent His Son to earth as a baby. Jesus grew up and started His ministry, teaching people about God and His kingdom. Then Jesus was killed on a cross. The Bible says that Jesus came into the world to save sinners. (1 Tim. 1:14)

Now that Jesus had died and rose again, Jesus

- Bibles
- "Jesus Ascended to Heaven" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster

had accomplished His mission. One thing His resurrection proved is that God accepted Jesus' payment for sin. [See *1 Corinthians 15:16-17*.]

Jesus ate a meal with His disciples and gave them important instructions. He told them to wait in Jerusalem for God to keep His promise to send the Holy Spirit. Jesus had told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would teach them and remind them of everything Jesus said. [See *John 14:26*.]

Jesus said the Holy Spirit would come to help them after Jesus returned to heaven. The Holy Spirit would give them power to do God's work.

Jesus said that His disciples would be witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Jesus wants everyone to know about Him! As Jesus' followers, our job is to share the gospel with the world. We don't have to worry about being bold enough or knowing the right words to say; the Holy Spirit gives us power to do God's work.

Jesus ascended to heaven in a cloud. The disciples watched Him go. Suddenly, two men in white clothes appeared. What did they say to the disciples? [*Let kids respond.*] Yes. They said, "Jesus will come again."

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Christ connection

LEADER • Today, Jesus is in heaven sitting in a place of honor—at the right hand of God. [See *Rom. 8:34*.] Jesus left earth and returned to heaven, but He did not leave us alone. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with us and help us do God's work.

One day, Jesus will return to make all things new

and to rule as Lord over all. As we wait for His return, we can do the work He has given us, and the Holy Spirit will give us power.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

- Key Passage Poster
- “On the Third Day” song

LEADER • This key passage reminds us three very important things about Jesus: He died for our sins, He was buried, and He was raised on the third day.

Not only did Jesus take the punishment we deserve for our sin, He rose from the dead to prove that God was satisfied with His sacrifice for us. Let’s sing our key passage song together.

Lead boys and girls in singing “On the Third Day.”

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • Have you ever had to do something that you could not do by yourself? How did you feel? Did you find help? Where? [*Call for responses.*] Let’s watch this video.

- “Unit 27, Session 5” discussion starter video

Show the “Unit 27, Session 5” discussion starter video.

Guide kids to discuss these questions:

- What job did the kid need to do? How was the scooter going to help?
- What job does Jesus give us to do? How does He help us? (***Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8.***)

LEADER • God gives us what we need to do the job He gives us to do. Jesus told His disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us power to share the

gospel in all the world. **Jesus ascended to heaven in a cloud.** As we wait for Jesus to return, we can do His work by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Sing (4 minutes)

• “The Glory” song

LEADER • Right this moment, Jesus is in heaven. He is alive, and one day He will return. Let’s sing and give Him glory.
Sing together “The Glory.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord God, we thank You for Your Word. Thank You for calling us to join in Your purpose of making Jesus known to people of every nation. You give us power through Your Spirit. Give us courage as we wait for You to return. We believe You will come again in the same way You ascended. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Apply the STORY

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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- paper
- pencils
- black markers

Show the key passage poster and choose a volunteer to read the key passage aloud. Distribute paper, pencils, and markers. Instruct kids to write the key passage on their papers. Guide kids to find partners. If you have an uneven number of kids, form a group of three. Each partner should use a marker to color over a word on her partner's paper.

Challenge kids to say the key passage, filling in the missing word. Continue covering words and saying the key passage until kids cover all the words.

SAY • Was anyone able to say the entire key passage from memory? [*Allow responses.*] Nice work, everyone! Keep practicing these verses. Memorizing them is a great way to remember the gospel!

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster

Distribute Bibles and guide kids to find the Book of Acts. Ask kids what division of the Bible the Book of Acts is in. (*New Testament History*)

Challenge kids to name the five divisions of the New Testament. (*Gospels, New Testament History, Paul's Letters, General Letters, Prophecy*) Explain that Acts is the only book

of New Testament History. It was written by Luke, who also wrote the Gospel of Luke.

Ask the following review questions. Encourage kids to read Acts 1:4-14 to check their answers.

1. Where did Jesus tell His disciples to wait? (*in Jerusalem, Acts 1:4*)
2. John baptized people with what? (*water, Acts 1:5*)
3. Jesus said the disciples would be baptized with whom? (*the Holy Spirit, Acts 1:5*)
4. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would give the disciples what? (*power, Acts 1:8*)
5. What did Jesus say the disciples would do? (*be His witnesses, Acts 1:8*)
6. What took Jesus out of the disciples' sight? (*a cloud, Acts 1:9*)
7. How will Jesus come again? (*in the same way He went into heaven, Acts 1:11*)
8. What did the disciples do back in Jerusalem? (*They prayed and waited like Jesus told them to do, Acts 1:12-14*)

Now guide kids to discuss these questions:

- Where is Jesus right now? What is He doing?
- What should we do while we wait for Jesus to return?

SAY • Jesus ascended to heaven in a cloud. The word *ascend* means “to move upward.” Jesus told His disciples He was going away to prepare a place for them. [See *John 14:2-3*.] The Bible says that Jesus returned to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father, a place of honor. [See *Mark 16:19*; *Acts 7:55*.] One day, He will return and rescue those who are waiting for Him. [See *Heb. 9:28*.]

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Don't just stand there!

Guide kids to stand in a circle. Choose one player to begin the game by saying, "Don't just stand there, [*name an action*]!" For example, "Don't just stand there, shake your shoulders!" She should lead the rest of the group in completing the action.

Then the next player will say, "Don't just stand there ..." and name another action. Continue around the circle so everyone gets a turn. Encourage kids to be creative.

If your group is small, extend the game and provide an added challenge by requiring kids to complete the current action and all previous actions before continuing on to the next player.

SAY • What happened after **Jesus ascended to heaven in a cloud**? Two men appeared and asked Jesus' disciples, "Why do you stand looking up into heaven?" They said that Jesus will return one day in the same way He went into heaven. So the disciples obeyed Jesus' instructions and went back to Jerusalem to pray and wait.

OPTION 2: Tricky timing

Instruct kids to stand. Announce that you will start a timer for 15 seconds. Challenge kids to sit down when they think 15 seconds has passed. Note which kid sits closest to the actual time. When every kid has sat, reveal the player with the most accurate timing.

Play additional rounds. Increase increments of time to 30, 40, or 50 seconds. You may choose to allow kids to take turns using the timer. For an added challenge, guide kids to close their eyes as they wait. Award points to the players

• stopwatch or timer

who sit closest to the actual elapsed time.

SAY • Before **Jesus ascended to heaven in a cloud**, He told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for God to send the Holy Spirit. Then, two men said that Jesus would come back for His people. The disciples had to wait.

When we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior, God gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit. As believers, we eagerly wait for the day Jesus will return to make all things new and to rule as Lord over all. The Bible says that no one knows when Jesus will return, so we should always be ready.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

While kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then lead kids in prayer. Pray that kids would believe that Jesus is alive and that they would live in a way that brings honor to God, trusting that Jesus will return again soon.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Make It Right" on the activity page. Kids will circle the correct words and then fill in the blanks to complete the Christ connection.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "Make It Right" activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.