



UP, UP... BUT NOT AWAY

Life & Ministry of Jesus • U10# 2 1st-3rd Gr. • May 12, 2024

Concept

Christ's ascension is the perfect ending of His work to save all people and the preparation of our place with Him for eternity.

Goal

Students will learn how and why Jesus left the earth and ascended to heaven.

Passage

Acts 1:1-3, 6-11

Key Verse: "In My Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you." John 14:2

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mighty Acts of God, Starr Meade</i> • <i>Black dry erase marker</i> <p>Learning Activity #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Large balloons, 3/each CT class</i> • <i>3 sets of clue cards, each set a different color</i> • <i>Magnifying glass</i> <p>Learning Activity #3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>3 spoons</i> • <i>3 brown paper grocery bags</i> • <i>3 bowls</i> • <i>3 bags of cotton balls</i> 	<p>Activity Station:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>2 Ascension Game boards</i> • <i>8 game markers</i> • <i>2 dice</i> • <i>Drawing paper, 1 sheet/student</i> • <i>Markers</i> • <i>6" paper plates, 2/student</i> • <i>Plastic fold-over sandwich bags, 1/every 2 students</i> • <i>Markers</i> • <i>Scissors</i> • <i>Glue sticks</i> • <i>Yarn, 18"/student</i>

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

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Acts begins with the culmination of Jesus' work of redemption on earth, his ascension to his throne in heaven. Luke records Jesus' presence with His disciples for forty days as he was assuring them of his actual physical resurrection and "speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). Up until Jesus' final moments with the disciples, they were asking about His mission, his plans and their role. Whether they understood and were ready to continue on their own or not, Jesus departed from them in an undeniably final act of supernatural anti-gravity.

Three years of constant care and concern, training and testing, lessons and love did not prepare the disciples for ministry alone. Jesus knew this and promised to send a helper, the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). But Jesus knew His work of redemption on earth was done. He came to earth to redeem and save all humanity from the power of sin. His death on the cross accomplished that redemption. The fact that He rose from the dead proved His sacrifice was acceptable to God and made our redemption sure. "[the] ascension was a complete and final demonstration that His atonement had forever solved the problem created by man's sin and rebellion." [1]

At the ascension, the disciples were not the cowering unbelievers we saw in Luke 24. Christ commissioned them as witnesses and was lifted up as they looked on. His work of redemption was done and their work of spreading the good news was to continue. Two men in white were there to remind them of reality, i.e., He is gone to heaven but will return (Acts 1:10).

Despite the seeming suddenness of His departure, there is no hint of anxiety in the account in Acts. Luke records that the disciples were unified and spent time praying while waiting for the Holy Spirit "not many days from now." They were ready to do what they were asked. His redemptive work on earth accomplished, Jesus went to heaven to "prepare a place" for believers (John 14: 2,3) and to be glorified so that the Holy Spirit would be sent to the church (John 7: 38, 39). It is reassuring for us because "though physically remote, He is always spiritually near, now free from earthly limitations." [2] "...now He is working from heaven by His Spirit, in and through His church. Christ's departure was not a sunset, but a sunrise." [3]

[1] J. Oswald Sanders, *The Incomparable Christ*, Moody Press, 1971, pp. 225-229.

[2] Ibid.

[3] W. Graham Scroggie, *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption*, Volume 2, 1994, Kregel, Publications, p. 203.

Set Up

Preparation for “CLUE HUNT”: Blow up 3 balloons. Find a place to hide the balloons outside your classroom, then tie them to something. Complete your “clue cards.” Choose hiding places for cards #2-7, keeping card #1 for each team to begin with. Write location clues on the back of cards #1-6 directing children to the next hiding place. On card #1 write a clue as to where card #2 can be found and on card #3 write a clue as to where card #4 can be found and so on; e.g., “look for clue #2 near the place you get a drink.” Be creative—Hide some of the cards outside, weather permitting.

Incorporation Lg. Group

Activity Stations

- **Game: "Ascension Game" [1]**
 - **Instructions:** Groups of two to four may play per game. Each player needs a unique playing piece or token and each group of four needs a die and playing sheet. Read the directions and have fun!
- **"A Special Place"**
 - **Instructions:** Draw a picture of a place that would be very special to you. Would it be inside or outside? What things would you most enjoy?
- **Craft – Magnifying glasses**
 - **Instructions:** Cut the sandwich bags apart around the seam and cut off fold-over top. Give each student two paper plates, a piece of a sandwich bag and a piece of yarn. Cut out the inside center ring of both paper plates. Run the glue stick around the cut edge on the front of one plate. Place the piece of the sandwich bag on top of the glue and press down so it will stick. Run the glue stick all around the cut edge of the back of the second plate. Place the glued edge on top of the piece of sandwich bag. Press to get it to stick. Cut the excess plastic that sticks out around the edges. Decorate the magnifying glass as desired. Punch a hole through the 2 plates and thread yarn through it. Tie it around the student's neck. These will be used in the CLUE HUNT.

[1]“Ascension Game,” Celebrate Jesus, Shining Star Publications, ©1990, A division of Good Apple, Inc., p. 13.

Introduction Lg. Group

Last week we talked about making disciples. The last thing Jesus told His disciples was that they were to make disciples of all the people in the world. This is God's plan for making sure people know how to be friends with God and go to heaven. Jesus was near Jerusalem on the top of a hill when he told His disciples what to do after He left the earth. This week we will learn how He left the earth and why He left the earth.

Instructions: Read “Jesus Ascends into Heaven,” pp. 244-246, *Mighty Acts of God*.

Introduction Continued

Jesus rose up into the sky and on up into the clouds until He was out of sight! A fancy word for this is “the Ascension.” “Ascend” means to go up. Can you imagine being there? Wow, what an awesome sight! Jesus disappeared into the clouds. I have a question. Why did Jesus leave? After all, He rose from the dead! Surely He could have convinced everyone that He was the Son of God after that! And think of the people who would have believed in Him. We have some detective work to do right now that will help us figure out the answer to this mysterious question.

Transition

Let's divide up into three groups. If you made a magnifying glass you can get it to help in our detective work.

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

“Clue Hunt”

Instructions: Divide the class into groups, naming each group a color that corresponds with the color of their clue cards. Read each ascension clue to your group as you find them, then turn the card over and read the location clue. Continue until your group finds all 7 clue cards. When you read the message on the 7th clue card, release your group's balloon.

- Each group begin with card #1, reading the location clue on the back.
- On the front of card #2 it will say #2 – “It is finished.”
- On the front of card #3 it will say #3 – “Keep looking.”
- On the front of card #4 it will say #4 – “I go to prepare a place for you.”
- On the front of card #5 it will say #5 – “At the right hand of God.”
- On the front of card #6 it will say #6 – “Keep looking.”

On the front of card #7 it will say #7 – “will come in just the same way you watched Him go.” On the back – “You have completed your mission. Keep looking up (release the balloon). Return to your classroom.”

Transition

Let's take our clues and sit down. We'll see how these clues fit together to help us understand why Jesus ascended.

Lesson Lg. Group

Did everyone find all of their clues? Good. So now we have all the answers and you understand why Jesus went back up to heaven, right? No?? Oh yeah, I forgot. We have to figure out what our clues mean, don't we? Let's look at the first one.

(Write the clues up on the white board as you speak, looking at them through the magnifying glass.)

#2 – “It is finished”

Does anyone have any idea what this clue means? What is finished? (Get responses.) Jesus is the one who said, “It is finished.”

Good News

He said this because He had done what He came to do. His work was done when He died on the cross to pay for our sins. However, from our side our sin still separates us from God until we thank Him for dying on the cross for us and individually receive His forgiveness. Then the sin barrier is removed and we begin a relationship with Him. Because we are forgiven we can talk to Him now, He is sitting at God's right hand praying for us and we know we will live with Him in heaven forever. When Jesus said "It is finished," He meant that His work on earth was done. That's the first clue.

#4 – "I go to prepare a place for you."

What does this clue mean? Do you have any idea where this place is? Who is Jesus preparing this place for? (Get responses.) Once when Jesus was talking to his disciples He told them that He wouldn't be with them much longer. Peter said, "Lord, why can't I come with you wherever you are going right now?" Jesus told Peter and the others, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." (NIV). Our key verse this week is, "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you," (John 14:2). What do you think about that? Can you imagine what an incredible place Jesus is making? Think of all the beautiful things that He has created in this world. The place He is preparing for us will be much more beautiful and we will all be perfect. So, another reason Jesus left the earth was to prepare a place in heaven for all people who have received His forgiveness. Cool.

#5 – "At the right hand of God."

What??! That's a strange clue, but I think we can find our answer in the Bible. In Mark 16:19 it says that when Jesus ascended up to heaven ". . . He sat down at the right hand of God." In the days of kings, sitting at the right hand of a king meant that you were almost as important as the king. You were the king's "right-hand man!" The people who followed Jesus were hoping that He would be a king on earth. Jesus is more than an earthly king. He is the king of all of heaven.

#7 – "will come in just the same way you watched Him go."

After Jesus ascended into the clouds, a couple of angels appeared and told the disciples that He would come back in the same way. Jesus is coming back some day! We will talk more about this in a couple of weeks. But just think about it. Jesus left, but He will come back and when He does He will come in the same way back down out of the sky through the clouds!

Transition

Learning Activity# 2 Sm. Groups

Let's get back into our small groups.

- So what do you think? Have you ever heard about Jesus going up in the clouds? Does it sound like some kind of fantasy? Is it weird to you or is it something you have no trouble believing? If you have trouble believing it, what can you do to find out more?
- It's really hard to think about what happens to people when they die, isn't it? Does it help you to know that Jesus is alive in heaven praying for you, preparing a place for you and will one day come back?
- What is the Good News?

Mission Prayer: Talk about and pray for Oasis Giving campaign.

Let's pray now and thank Jesus that He came to earth to die for our sins and went back to heaven to prepare a special place for those who have received His forgiveness. Ask Him to help you look forward to His return and consider how awesome this special place will be.

Transition

Learning Activity# 3 Lg. Group

For now, let's get up and play a game.

Game - Cloud Relay [1]

Instructions: Divide into 3 teams. Line up one behind the other. Place a paper bag about eight feet away from the first person in each line. Give each team a spoon and a bowl of "clouds" (cotton balls). When the teacher says go, each team member must use the spoon to scoop as many "clouds" as will fit on the spoon and run them down to the bag. Dump the "clouds" into the bag and run the spoon back to the next teammate. If "clouds" are dropped, leave them on the ground and run the spoon back to the next teammate and let them try. When all members of the team have had a turn, they sit down. When all teams are through, count the cotton balls to determine who wins.

[1] "Catch a Cloud Relay," Bible Games for Grades 1-2, Rainbow Publishers, 1988, p.32.