

April 10, 2013

Ascension

Luke 24:45-53

Acts 1:1-11

LESSON FOCUS

“And you will be my witnesses from one end of the earth to the other.” (Acts 1:8)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. . . . And you will be my witnesses from one end of the earth to the other.” (Acts 1:8)

“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.” (John 14:3). This lesson is about Jesus’ ascension into heaven.

While Jesus’ death and resurrection form the core of all that binds us to the Father in heaven, Jesus’ ascension seems a paradox. He was leaving those for whom He had laid down His life in love! His friends had never known such separation from Him since He had called them to leave everything and follow Him. After years of daily intimacy, why would Jesus leave them now? Was His ascension a kind of abandonment? Now that He had completed His redemptive work, He had proven His sovereignty over even death! He had shown the world that He was exactly who He said He was.

In John 14, Jesus made it clear to those He loved that even though He was going away, He would not leave them orphaned. His ascension did not signal abandonment; rather, it was the door to a new kind of power.

As you prepare to teach this lesson, take time to read all of John 14. Absorb Jesus’ promises and comforts. He ascended to heaven not to orphan us, but to make us participants in the most phenomenal plan of all time! Rejoice with your students that Jesus’ help is always available – to you and to them, anywhere and anytime. His completed work on earth proves Him to be not only the ascended, reigning King, but also the loving shepherd who will prepare a place for us and is fully able to bring us to that place!

BIBLE STORY

Luke 24:36-53

Acts 1:1-11

Read from your Bible. Ask students to find it in a Bible too. Those that can read can follow along. Choose the passages you would like to read aloud. Use Tell the Story below. Use visuals to help tell the story. Use a picture Bible to help children see the story.

The disciples were all together in a room when Jesus suddenly appeared to them. He said, “Peace be with you.” But the disciples were afraid; they thought they were seeing a ghost! They didn’t understand that Jesus was really alive again. Jesus asked them why they were having trouble believing it was really Him. He told them to look at His hands and feet and touch Him. That way they would know He was real.

Remember—Jesus had been crucified, so He had nail scars in His hands and feet. The disciples would be able to see them.

Jesus reminded the disciples what He had said to them while He was still with them. He said that everything that happened to Him had been written down in the Scriptures. And Jesus opened their minds to understand what the Scriptures said. He said, “It is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that a change of hearts and lives and forgiveness of sins would be preached in His name to all nations, starting in Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”

Jesus continued by telling the disciples they were to wait for the Holy Spirit to come to them before they began preaching. They needed the Holy Spirit of God to have power to speak for Him.

After these instructions, Jesus led them to Bethany. Then He raised His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them, He began to rise up into the sky and into Heaven. The disciples worshipped Him and went back to Jerusalem. They were so happy and excited to know that Jesus was alive! They went to the Temple each day, praising God. And they continued to wait for the Holy Spirit to come upon them.

The disciples obeyed Jesus’ command and waited for the Holy Spirit. The book of Acts continues where Luke leaves off—it was also written by Luke. He tells us many things about how the early Christians spread the Gospel around the world.

We have learned so much about Jesus. He came to earth to share the love of God with people and ultimately to die for our sins. It was all part of God’s plan to save us. Without Jesus and His death on the cross, we would not have a way to be forgiven and be right with God. Only through Christ can we have eternal life.

Did you know there are people all around us who do not know that Jesus loves them? It seems hard to imagine, but it is true. That is why Jesus gave us the command to go and tell others about Him. It takes all of us to reach this world for Christ. We are all in different places and see different people every day. So wherever we go, we need to remember to take the love of Jesus with us—and share it!

BIBLE CHALLENGE

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20).

Read this passage from your Bible. Ask students to locate it in a Bible too. Help them learn this verse.

It's been a long time since Jesus ascended into heaven. But His promise to care for us is still true.

VIDEO SEGMENT

The events should focus on the resurrection.

Upper Elementary – Story Keepers – The Final Conflict (approximately 30 minutes)

The video is on VHS. You'll want to take a moment to rewind it!

GAMES

Game 1: Family Ball

You'll need a tennis ball.

Students stand in a circle. Choose one volunteer to stand in the center of the circle and be the Ball Tosser. Ball Tosser throws the ball straight up into the air and calls the name of one of the students. Student whose name was called moves to get the ball, becoming the Ball Catcher. All other students move around the playing area, attempting to move away from the Ball Catcher. When the Ball Catcher gets the ball, he or she calls out "Freeze" and all the other students must freeze.

Ball Catcher rolls the ball at any of the other students who must stay standing on one foot but can lean out of the way of the ball. The student who is first touched by the ball answers one question about today's Bible lesson and becomes the Ball Tosser for the next round. Students return to circle position and the new Ball Tosser throws the ball again, calling out the name of a different student. Repeat as time allows.

Game 2: Resurrection Toss

Bible Focus: Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20

Materials

Bibles, paper plates, markers

Preparation

Print the letters from the sentence "Jesus is alive," printing one letter on each paper plate. Make one set for every 12 students. Use a different-color marker each time you print the sentence.

Lead the Game

God's promise of salvation came true in Jesus' death and resurrection. Let's play a game where we are reminded of Jesus' resurrection.

Divide class into teams of no more than 12. Each team lines up single file at one side of the playing area. Give each student a paper plate written in his or her team's color. (If teams are small some students may have more than one paper plate.)

Students take turns throwing the paper plates like Frisbees. Then, at your signal, first student in each line runs to collect one of his or her team's paper plates. Next students in line repeat process.

When all of the paper plates have been collected, teams put them in order to read "Jesus is alive."

Options

If you have a small playing area, challenge students to skip or hop (or another way of movement) to collect the plates and return to line.

Students retrieve the plates in order. The first team to complete the sentence gives an example of how we know Jesus is alive.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some other ways to complete the sentence "Jesus is . . . " ?
2. What are some ways we can show Jesus we are thankful for the wonderful news that He died to take the punishment for our sins and that He is alive today?

SCIENCE EXPLORATION

Balloon Pop

Matthew 28:20 says: *“(Jesus said,) ‘Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”*

All through our lives we need help – especially when things happen that make us afraid. Because Jesus is alive, He can protect and help us.

Look at these balloons to find out what protects them.

Supplies:

2 large balloons – inflated and tied off

Clear tape

Sewing needle

Experiment:

After you’ve inflated the balloons (a little less than full) place a 2 inch strip of tape at the end of one balloon. Smooth over the tape to remove all air bubbles. (You may want to practice ahead of time.)

Hold up the needle and the balloon without the tape.

Ask: What will happen when I poke the balloon with this needle? The balloon doesn’t have any protection against the sharp needle, so it probably will pop.

Use the needle to pop the balloon.

Hold up the second balloon. Firmly push the needle through the tape, keeping a good grasp on the needle. Then smoothly remove the needle.

Ask: Why didn’t this balloon pop?

This balloon didn’t pop when I poked it with this needle because it had something helping it to stay strong and not pop.

Show students the tape on the balloon.

Jesus promises to help us. Because Jesus is alive, we know He will keep His promises. Let’s read Matthew 28:20 together. Jesus promises to be with us now and forever, helping us and caring for us.