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The Ascension , Jesus Goes to Prepare a Place

Scripture: Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:1-11

Theme: Jesus went to heaven but promised to come back

Jr High (Ages 12-14)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

This Sunday school lesson explores the powerful and often overlooked event of Jesus' Ascension, where He returned to heaven after His resurrection (Luke 24:50-53) and left His disciples with a promise of His return (Acts 1:1-11). Students will learn that while Jesus went to prepare a place for them in heaven, His absence was temporary, just as He had promised. The disciples' awe and confusion at watching Him ascend (Acts 1:9-11) teach us that faith isn't about physical presence but trusting in His word. They also see how Jesus fulfilled His mission by sending the Holy Spirit afterward, setting the stage for His future return in power. The key verse, Acts 1:11, "This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven", reminds us that Jesus will return. Optional reflection: children can draw a picture of Jesus helping their friends, then share one way they can help someone else this week. This extra activity supports the lesson's theme and gives teachers a simple, lowprep option for extending the discussion.

Bible Story

After Jesus rose from the dead, He spent forty days teaching His disciples in Jerusalem. On one of those days, while they were gathered together, the apostles Peter, James, John, and the others sat with Jesus at the table. Suddenly, Jesus took them by surprise when He led them to the nearby Mount of Olives. As they walked with Him, one of the disciples, Judas Iscariot, who had betrayed Jesus, was with them. Just before Jesus left, He told them, 'It is impossible for you to understand now what I must suffer and how I must fulfill my role in the plan of God.' He then turned to His disciples and said, 'You will be given power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth.' (Luke 24:49)",

On the Mount of Olives, Jesus took His disciples to a place where they could be alone. He spoke of His upcoming death in Jerusalem and how He would be raised from the dead on the third day. Then, as He was speaking, He was

taken up before their very eyes. Two men dressed in white clothing stood beside them. They asked, 'Why are you looking into the sky when Jesus is taken up to heaven?' The disciples were confused and disheartened, but Jesus had already promised them that He would return to them. He had told them to wait in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:51, 53),

After Jesus ascended into heaven, the eleven disciples were left in Jerusalem, filled with great fear and wonder. They were still in awe of what had happened, and they huddled together in the upper room, unsure of what to do next. One day, while they were praying together, an angel appeared before them. The angel said, 'Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.' (Acts 1:11) The disciples were filled with excitement and joy, even though they still didn't fully understand what this meant for them. They began to spread the news that Jesus had truly risen and had gone back to God in heaven, preparing a special place for them to follow Him.'",

The next day, the disciples gathered again in the upper room. They were filled with hope and a sense of urgency, though they still had many questions. Jesus had promised them the Holy Spirit, and now they were waiting eagerly. While they prayed, Peter stood up and said, 'Brothers and sisters, we must now return to Jerusalem to prepare a place where we can stay together.' The disciples agreed, and they set out to find a place to stay in the city. Meanwhile, the angel had left them, and they continued to wait in the upper room, filled with anticipation and the promise of God's power.'",

As the days passed, the disciples began to spread the good news about Jesus to others in Jerusalem. They told everyone they met that Jesus had truly risen from the dead and had returned to God in heaven. Some people doubted, but others were convinced. Jesus' friends and neighbors began to ask, 'What does this mean? Will Jesus really come back?' The disciples explained that Jesus had told them about His return and that they should wait for the Holy Spirit to empower them to be His witnesses. They knew that God's promise was not just about Jesus coming back to them, but also about them being part of His mission. The disciples continued to pray and wait, trusting that God would keep His word.'",

On the tenth day of the first month of that year, the disciples were gathered together again in the upper room, waiting for the Holy Spirit to come down upon them. The Bible tells us that this was the day after the Day of Pentecost, which marked the beginning of the Church. Suddenly, a sound like a strong, rushing wind filled the house where the disciples were gathered. There appeared tongues like fire that rested on each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to speak in other tongues, proclaiming the wonders of God. This was the beginning of the Church, and the disciples knew that God had kept His promise. They were now empowered to go into the world and share the good news about Jesus, knowing that He would return one day to gather them all together again.

Key Verse

Acts 1:11 , 'This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.'

The key verse (Acts 1:11 , 'This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.') calls us to respond to God's truth.

Activities

Activity 1: Jesus' Ascension Art Craft

Craft a simple art piece depicting Jesus ascending into heaven with the disciples watching. Use paper plates, markers, and construction paper to create a cloud, angels, and a ladder leading to heaven. Discuss how Jesus' return is promised but not yet here.

Supplies needed:

- Paper plates (one per child)
- Markers/crayons

- Construction paper (white for clouds, gold for angels, red/blue for sky)
- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- Googly eyes (optional)
- Pipe cleaners (for angel wings)

1. Step 1: Draw and cut out a cloud shape from white construction paper and glue it on the paper plate. Draw a ladder or angel wings below it.
2. Step 2: Use gold construction paper to cut out angels and glue them around the base of the ladder. Add googly eyes and pipe cleaner wings if available. Decorate with markers (e.g., write 'HEAVEN' or 'JESUS ASCENDS').
3. Step 3: Ask: What does it look like when Jesus returns? How can we be ready?

Activity 2: Promise Keeper Challenge Game

A quick game where kids act out Jesus' promise to return. Use a 'countdown' timer (e.g., 30 seconds) to race to find hidden 'promises' (written on slips of paper) and act them out. Example promises: 'I will never leave you' (John 14:18), 'I will come again' (John 14:3).

Supplies needed:

- Small slips of paper with Bible verses written on them (e.g., John 14:3)
- Timer (phone or clock)
- Small prizes (stickers, temporary tattoos) for participation

1. Step 1: Hide the slips of paper around the room. Give each child a verse to memorize.
2. Step 2: Set a timer for 30 seconds. Kids run to find their verse and act it out (e.g., hold hands for 'never leaving' or pretend to fly for 'coming again').
3. Step 3: Discuss: How does knowing Jesus will return keep us hopeful? How can we wait for Him faithfully?

Discussion Questions

- Q1: What did Jesus promise His disciples after He ascended into heaven? (Luke 24:50, 53; Acts 1:1, 11)
- Q2: Why do you think the disciples were so scared when Jesus left? What would scare you if a friend suddenly disappeared?
- Q3: How does it feel to know Jesus will come back someday? What does that teach us about waiting for Him?
- Q4: If Jesus is coming back, what should we be doing now to be ready? (Think: loving others, sharing His love, studying the Bible.)
- Q5: What's one way you can help others remember that Jesus will return? (Example: share a Bible verse with a friend!)

Prayer Focus

Pray for courage and hope as we wait for Jesus' return. Ask God to help us live faithfully now, so we're ready when He comes. Ask for wisdom for Christians in the Middle East who face persecution but still hold onto hope in Jesus' promise.

>> Missions Spotlight

The disciples and early Christians waited in Jerusalem (Acts 1:1, 11) just like we wait for Jesus. Pray for Christians in Israel, Palestine, and Jordan who live in the same land where Jesus walked. Ask God to protect them, give them strength, and help them share His love, even in hard times.

-> To the Cross

Jesus went to the cross to die for our sins, but He also went to heaven to prepare a place for us, like a cozy home in the sky! His resurrection proves He's alive and will come back one day to welcome us there. Because of the cross, we don't have to wait alone; we have a Heavenly Father who loves us and a Savior who's coming back!