

The Great Commission (Jesus Ascends into Heaven)

Teacher Pep Talk: Picture it: You are a disciple standing there watching Jesus as He ascends into heaven. He goes up and up and up... finally He is completely out of sight. And what do you do? You keep standing there, of course! (Probably with your mouth still hanging open!) You just saw the most amazing thing! You keep watching to see what will happen next. And then suddenly two angels appear to tell you to “Snap out of it.” Perhaps you have forgotten what Jesus said a little earlier: “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.” You have a lot to do... better get busy! You don’t want to just be standing around here doing nothing when He comes back!

You will Need: “I’ll Be Back”: suitcase or backpack, travel items, and snacks
Make a Cloud: copies of activity sheet, cotton balls, and glue

Major Points: After Easter Sunday, Jesus was on the earth for 40 more days. He gave His Disciples a new job. (The Great Commission)
After 40 days, Jesus went up (Ascended) into heaven.
One day Jesus will come back!

Reference Verses: Matthew 28:19 (The Great Commission)
Acts 1:7-11 (The Ascension of Jesus)

Memory Verse: Acts 1:8 “...you will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth.”

Lesson: **After Easter Sunday, Jesus was on the earth for 40 more days.**

- We have talked a lot about Easter lately. We have learned all about how Jesus died on the cross, and was buried in the tomb, and how He was raised from the dead on Easter Sunday. But what happened to Jesus after that? Where is He now? Is He ever coming back? And what are we supposed to be doing in the meantime? These are things we are going to talk about today.
- After Jesus was raised from the dead on Easter Sunday, He was ALIVE again forever.
- For 40 days after Easter, Jesus was seen here on the earth. He visited people and talked with them. He ate with them and taught them. Many, many people saw Him alive again.

He gave His Disciples a new job. (The Great Commission)

- Jesus visited with His Disciples during those 40 days.

- While He was with them one day, He gave them a new job.
- Their new job was to “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.”
- Wow! That’s a BIG job!! He wanted them to go out into the WHOLE WORLD and make disciples. That means that He wanted them to go around talking to people about Jesus!
- This job is SO BIG that we call it the Great Commission.
- And, guess what! That is still the job of believers today!

After 40 days, Jesus went up (Ascended) into heaven.

- Jesus was seen for 40 days on the earth, and then a MIRACULOUS thing happened. One day, right in front of His Disciples, Jesus was taken up into heaven!
- The disciples and Jesus were up on the top of a hill talking. And then Jesus started going up, up, up into the sky. And the disciples were all watching Him. (Probably with their mouths hanging open... like this...) And then, He was gone!
- And there they were... still standing there... looking up... with their mouths open... (Just like this)... and watching... (Like this)... wondering what was going to happen next. Do you know what happened next?
- Two angels came and stood with the disciples. They told them very politely, “*Men of Galilee, why do you stand 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.*” Or in other words: “Hey... Snap out of it!!”
- If it had been me, I can tell you what I would have done. I would have been standing there, watching, with my mouth hanging open, like this, waiting to see what would happen next. And, if the angels hadn’t come along when they did, I would probably still be up there on that hill, looking up... and waiting... with my mouth hanging open... just like this... until He came back. But that’s not what God had in mind, is it?
- Jesus had given the disciples a job, hadn’t He? They were to be His witnesses in all the world, starting in Jerusalem. They couldn’t just stand around waiting forever on top of a hill! They had a job to do!

One day Jesus will come back.

- The angels told the disciples that Jesus was in heaven and that one day He would come back!
- Until then, we are to be busy doing the job He gave us!

Let's pray and thank God that Jesus is in heaven and that one day He is coming back.

PRAYER: Dear God,
Thank you for sending Jesus to us!
Thank you that now He is in heaven with you!
Thank you that one day He is coming back!
Thank you for loving us! We love you back!
Amen

Suggested Activities:

"I'll Be Back!"

In this activity, the children experience a short-term separation from one of the teachers. The children will be astonished that you actually leave the classroom during class!

Bring a suitcase, backpack, or other piece of luggage into the classroom. For fun, fill it with various items you might take with you on a trip. (Canteen, snacks, sunglasses, etc.)

Have the children sit where they can see the door. Explain to the children that you are going to be taking a little trip pretty soon. Show them your piece of luggage. Drag out all of the packed items and put them on the floor in front of you. Talk about what the things are as you put them back into your luggage. (Take some time with this. Explain what each item is and what it does.) After you are all packed, tell the children you are leaving now, but that you will be "right back." Tell them to watch and wait for you.

Take your luggage, and head toward the door. Wave good-bye, and tell them again that you will be right back. Go out the door and close it. Count to 10 and then open the door and come back in. Be excited to see them, like you've been gone a long time.

Say things like "Hello! How are you? I missed you! How did you do while I was gone? Oh, you've grown so much... etc!" The kids will love this. For extra fun, bring them a "souvenir" of your trip; something that was hidden in your luggage, or in the hallway. (I suggest snacks!)

While you are having your little snack, remind them that even though Jesus went up into heaven, He promised to come back again. And, since He always keeps His promises, we can expect Him anytime!

NOTE: Don't leave your class unsupervised while you are in the hallway. Have another adult or older teen in the room while you are gone on your "trip!"

Make a Cloud

The Bible says that Jesus was "taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight." Make a cloud by gluing cotton balls to the activity sheet. Pull the balls apart a little; it makes it easier to glue them on. *(Children may also wish to draw Jesus in the picture. If so, then use crayons, and **do that FIRST, BEFORE** the glue is used!)*

Jesus said to His Disciples: “ ... you will be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth. ” After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. **Acts 1:8-9**

