

Jesus commission and ascension



Bible reading

The Great Commission, Matthew 28:16-20 bit.ly/3u2sDoo

Ascension of Jesus, Luke 24:50-53 bit.ly/3OdV7Cr

Parable of the Great Banquet, Luke 14:15-24 bit.ly/491r20S

Bible video

- The Great Commission – Kids Ablaze inc bit.ly/3vHSJxn
- Ascension of Jesus – Loudmouth Pastor bit.ly/48HQkI3
- Parable of the Great Banquet - Kids Hub TV bit.ly/48AfGBb

Arrival activity

Ascension Craft

You will need a paper cup for each person, some string, a paper template of Jesus to colour in, and a cloud shape made of card. You may also want to use some cotton wool. Make a hole in the base of the cup that is just large enough for the string to pass through, then feed the string through. Glue or tape the cloud shape to the end of the string which is outside the cup – you might choose to glue some cotton wool on to make it look more cloud-like. Decorate the cup to make it look cloudlike too. On the other end of the string, glue or tape your image of Jesus. Alternatively you could use a Lego person or pipe-cleaner person and tie it to the string. Now you can re-enact the ascension, pulling on the cloud until Jesus disappears from sight (inside the cup).



Completion of this task could earn campers the “Go out and be” badge.

Story

Jesus calls his disciples

Peter comes in, drops his rucksack on the floor, and sit in a chair with a sigh, putting his feet up on the chair opposite. Mum hands him a cup of tea and pushes his feet off.

Mum: Honestly, Simon!

Peter: It's Peter, mum. Nobody calls me Simon any more except you.

Mum: Peter indeed! You'll be telling me your name's Zebedee next.

Peter: No, mum, that's James and John. They're Zebedee's sons. The SONS OF THUNDER (*in a thundering voice- like a superhero movie*)

Mum: Sons of Thunder indeed! So, you go swanning off with that band of ruffians for three years – and then just walk in as though nothing had happened. We've still got nets need mending, my lad!

Peter: But mu..u..u..m. I gave up being a fisherman to be a fisher of men. That's what Jesus called it.

Mum: Fisher of men, indeed. That Jesus, he's a downright trouble maker, by all accounts. Mrs Fisher down the road, she said that he was egging other young men on to try walking on water and nearly got one half drowned.

Peter: Actually, that was me and ...

Mum: And Mrs Tattler at the hat shop, she said he had called the leaders in the synagogue names and had vandalised the stalls in the temple. His parents must be so ashamed.

Peter: Actually, God his father is pretty proud of him...

Mum: God's his father, indeed! That'll be why he's making up stories like feeding thousands of people with a few tuna sandwiches. He'll get himself in trouble, that boy.

Peter: He did, mum. He was arrested and put to death.

Mum: What? No! Surely not ...

Peter: But it was amazing, mum. Three days later he came back to life. I met with him and talked with him.

Mum: Came back to life, indeed! So where is he now then? Wait, let me guess ... he's a ghost! Oooooh!

Peter: No, mum. Not a ghost. A real live person. Not dead any more.

Mum: You'll be telling me he'll be walking through that door any minute.

Peter: No, mum, I won't. Because this is the amazing thing. We were up on the mountain with him just yesterday.

Mum: Up to no good, no doubt.

Peter: And he was telling us that he couldn't stick around for ever on earth, but would be with us for ever in heaven and through the Holy Spirit.

Mum: I'm not having my son drinking spirits!

Peter: Not that sort of spirit, mother! The clouds gathered around him and ...

Mum: Don't tell me he disappeared in a puff of smoke. You're so gullible. He probably hid behind a rock or something.

Peter: No, as the clouds lifted, we saw him go up into heaven.

Mum: Just his feet sticking down out of the cloud as it went up in the sky like a hot air balloon?

Peter: Well, actually ...

Mum: Straight up to heaven, leaving you on the ground with your necks bent back, gazing up into the sky like you were daydreaming?

Peter: That's about it. He was going back to his father, God, and his heavenly kingdom.

Mum: Heavenly Kingdom, indeed. You sound like you've been drinking the dodgy water. So now you come creeping back with your tail between your legs, hoping for a hot meal and a bed and your old job back with your dad in the fishing business?

Peter: No, actually. I'm just here for a change of underwear and to fill up my water bottle. I'm off again in a moment. Jesus left us with a job to do. I'm a fisherman for God's kingdom, after all.

Parable

Before we begin our story, I just need to open my mail. This envelope arrived, addressed to me, and I just can't wait to open it up and look inside. Is it a letter, a card, a bill perhaps? You'll excuse me while I have a look.

My, oh my, it's an invitation. You are invited, it says. Come and join us. Food. Drink. It's party time. RSVP. What should I answer? What will I tell them? Will I go and join them in their celebration?

Between the lines written in an invitation, we see a glimpse of God's wonderful kingdom. A person was holding a big, big celebration feast. It was such a big, big celebration that this person wanted all their friends and relations to come and eat, drink and party with them. So invitations were written and sent out – RSVP. And the preparations began.

The tables were covered with red tablecloths and laid with the best and shiniest silver cutlery, plates and bowls. The glasses were polished until they gleamed in the light of the candles adorning the tables. Napkins were folded in fancy designs. And the food – oh, the food. Close your eyes and open up your imaginations as you see plate after plate of the most wonderful food you have ever seen being prepared to tickle the taste buds of the assorted guests. Bottles of wine and bowls of punch carried in the hands of smartly dressed waiters. People up ladders fixing decorations, people on their knees sweeping up the tiniest speck of dust from the floor. Everything was ready.

The party-giver was so excited and sent out the message that the party was ready to begin. They sat back and waited for the guests to arrive. But what arrived was a shedload of excuses. I'm too busy to come. I've got other commitments. Something's cropped up and it seems I'm double booked. So so sorry, I can't make it this time. I can't make it. I can't make it. So sorry.

The party-giver was Fu.Ri.Ous! All this preparation and generosity and people were making worthless excuses. They just couldn't be bothered to come. So what do you think the party-giver did?

There was a feast to be shared so a team was sent out. Invite everyone! The homeless people off the street will appreciate the food. The lonely people at the edges of society will appreciate the company. The people struggling with poverty or worry, the unemployed and those who find it difficult to access things because of disabilities – all will find a welcome here.

And so everyone was invited ... Everyone except the people who had made their excuses. The house was full to overflowing and everyone had a share in the big big celebration.

This story is a parable, a picture story, of course. I wonder what it tells us about God's kingdom.

Campfire song

To the tune of 'One Man Went to Mow'.

Each time you add a verse you need to recap all the other verses, so the song grows. After the three examples shared here, the group can begin to add in ideas for how we can go and show God's love and keep the song going.

Jesus said to go: "Go and talk about me.
Go and talk about God's love.
Go and talk about me".

Jesus said to go: "Go and talk about me.
Go and show God's love to all.
Go and talk about God's love.
Go and talk about me".

Jesus said to go: "Go and talk about me.
Help the sick and feed the poor.
Go and show God's love to all.
Go and talk about God's love.
Go and talk about me".

And so on...



Wondering questions

- I wonder where you see God in today's stories and in your story.
- I wonder what one thing you liked best from today's stories.
- I wonder what you will remember about today's stories and maybe share with someone else.

What's your story?

- Can you share the story of a time you surprised your friends?
- Can you share the story of a time you had a special job to do?
- Can you share the story of a time you trusted Jesus or said yes to Jesus's invitation to be his friend?

Small group prayer

Puzzle Prayer

What you need:

- Large puzzle pieces (preferably ones which are plain on the back)
- Marker pens.

Ensure everyone has a puzzle piece. Everyone can use the marker pens to write their friends' names and their own to signify we are all welcomed by God and part of the big picture that is God's kingdom. Encourage everyone to hold their puzzle piece in their hands and to quietly ask God to bless the people whose names are written on their, including themselves.

Now ask them to choose someone in the room (ensure everyone gets one, adults could be included) to pass their piece to and to say "We are all part of God's big picture."

Activity/craft

Invitations

Invites for celebration service/ other groups which meet in the week.

What you need:

- Paper or coloured card
- Pens, pencil crayons, chalks or crayons



- Stickers, glitter, sequins or feathers (optional)
- Key information about the day, time and venue of the celebration service.

What you do:

Each child can design and create personal invitations to attend a follow up service or a group, to encourage friends and family to come along.

Younger children may prefer to use a template or to have the main information printed for them so that they can focus on the design and decoration of their invite. Alternatively, an adult or older child may need to help them with writing the key information.

STEM activity

Party Popper

What you need:

- Balloon
- Plastic bottle cut in half
- String or ribbon to tie the balloon
- Tissue paper cut up to make homemade confetti.



What you do:

Decorate your bottle as you wish. Partially inflate the balloon and tie a piece of string in a bow around the opening, as far as possible from the open end, to stop it deflating. Stretch the opening of the balloon over the small end of the upper half of a plastic bottle. Fill your bottle with pieces of tissue paper torn up to create confetti. Release the bow and watch the confetti fire into the air.

Recipe

Rainbow Wrap

What you need:

- Wraps (free from)
- Mayonnaise (free from)
- Butter (free from)
- Cream cheese (free from)
- Lettuce
- Sliced yellow pepper
- Cucumber
- Grated carrot
- Tomato
- Plates
- Cocktail sticks
- Sticky labels
- Pencil.



What you do:

1. Write name and the words 'I am invited' on the sticky label and pop it onto the cocktail stick before washing hands.
2. Depending on the age and skill of the child either chop up the cucumber, tomatoes and peppers in advance or chop as you go.

3. Place a wrap on a plate and thinly spread it with butter or mayonnaise or cream cheese as preferred.
4. Place some lettuce leaves, carrot, cucumber, tomatoes and peppers in the middle to create a rainbow effect.
5. Fold the wrap to close it and pop in the cocktail stick to secure it. If you would like to make your wrap even more colourful, you could use food decorating pens to decorate the wrap. Eat and enjoy.

Games

The Banquet Game

This is the well known chocolate game. You will need a bar of chocolate on a plate, a knife and fork, a die and three items of fancy clothing (eg a feather boa, a fancy hat, a pair of gloves and some high heeled shoes). Players sit in a circle round a table and chair, with the items all on the table. In turn, the players roll the die. When somebody rolls a six, they run to the table, put on the fancy clothes, then use the knife and fork to cut and eat the chocolate. They must not touch the chocolate with their hands. While they are doing this, the other players continue to roll the die in turn. When someone else rolls a six, the first player must stop eating and take off the fancy clothes, passing them to the new player. Keep going until all the chocolate is eaten. If you feel uncomfortable about sharing knives and forks, you could give each player that comes to the table a fresh set.

Up in the Air

Divide the group into two teams and seat them facing each other, about two metres apart (depending on average age of the group). On "Go" throw a balloon to each team. The aim is for them to bat the balloon so that it passes over the heads of the opposing team and lands on the floor. Each time a balloon touches the floor behind the opposing team, the team gets a point (you will want to put an impartial judge to watch each area and count, then to throw the balloon back into the mix). Once the game gets going, you could introduce two more balloons, then two more again. When the game has gone on long enough, blow a whistle and everyone should stop while the scores are compared.

Large group prayer

Arrow Prayer

1. Form a circle. Either use a finger to point or use pre-prepared paper arrows.
2. Point to the lights and say, "Dear God, shine your welcoming light on us."
3. Point to ourselves and say, "Thank you that you welcomed us, just as we are."
4. Point inside the circle at each other and say, "Help us to remind others that you welcome them too."
5. Turn around to point outwards and say, "Fill this church with your love and make it a welcoming place."
6. Point to the door that leads outside and say, "Let's go out and welcome everyone in your name, Amen".

