

Ascension Lesson

Lesson Goal: This lesson's goal is for the student to understand that 40 days after Jesus' Resurrection on Easter Sunday, He rose into heaven on Ascension Thursday, but Jesus promised that He would soon send the Holy Spirit to the apostles to give them strength to preach the gospel.

Overview: Forty days after Easter, Jesus ascended into heaven. Before His ascension He told His apostles that they were to teach to all people and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. They were frightened, but He would send the Holy Spirit to remind them of all He taught and give them the courage they would need to teach the gospel.

Pre-Video Discussion: Have a helium balloon on hand as you tell the students that today you are going to talk about Jesus' Ascension into heaven. Explain that Ascension means to rise up - just as a helium balloon rises up. If the balloon were to be released outside it would rise up, and you would never see it again. Jesus rose up out of the apostles' sight into heaven, but He promised He would always be with them and He would send the Holy Spirit to strengthen them.

Watch "Ascension of the Lord" on Catholic Brain

Comprehension and Discussion Questions:

Note: These questions are asked after the video to check student comprehension and to clarify and further discuss and explain what was seen on the video.

1) What does ascension mean?

Ascend means to go up or rise up. So ascension is the act of rising up. Jesus rose up into heaven.

2) Why did Jesus remain on earth for forty days?

By remaining on earth Jesus proved that He had truly risen from the dead. Jesus ate with His disciples, which also proved He was really alive. (Spirits do not need food!) Jesus was not continuously with His disciples during these forty days, but when He was with them He was instructing them and preparing them for their coming work of spreading the gospel and building up His Church.

3) What were Jesus' final instructions before ascending into heaven?

Jesus talked with His disciples about how they were to preach to all people and baptize them.

Jesus' final instruction to His disciples is found in the gospel of Matthew 28: 18-20:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. I am with you always, until the end of the world."

4) What did Jesus promise the disciples before ascending into heaven?

Jesus told His disciples not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would give them the courage, faith, and knowledge they would need to go out and preach the gospel to everyone.

5) Why did Jesus go back to heaven?

Jesus went to heaven to prepare a place for those who love Him. While on earth Jesus showed us the way to heaven and, through Him, we gain heaven, so it is fitting that He reigns there and sits at the right hand of the Father interceding for us. Jesus is both human and divine, and His human nature is glorified in heaven. In heaven, His human nature still bears the wounds of His Passion - a visible sign of His love for us.

Activity:

Take the helium balloon outside and release it. Pretend you are the apostles and imagine what it was like to see Jesus ascend into the sky and out of sight. They must have felt very lonely and sad, but remember, the Holy Spirit had not come down upon them yet. With Pentecost, they will have a renewed spirit.