Prepare for Take-Off!

The Ascension of Jesus

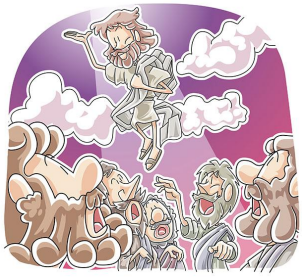
Acts 1:1-11 & Luke 24:44-53 *ESV*

Bible Lesson & Activities for Children



THE **SUNDAY SCHOOL** STORE

Prepare for Take-Off!
Jesus Ascends into Heaven



Before His departure from Earth, Jesus gave His disciples some special instructions and promises. These words of hope and comfort are for us, too. We have an important job to do, but the Holy Spirit gives us the power to do His work! There are a lot of things in life that we have to prepare for and patiently walk through step by step. In the same way, Jesus calls us to patiently await His return, and meanwhile, to tell others of His love and continue sharing it with them! He is always present with us and gives us strength.

Jesus did not leave us alone, but departed from Earth temporarily to prepare a place for us. He gave us the task of carrying on his work, but He also sent the Holy Spirit to comfort and strengthen us with His power. Jesus will return someday, but His presence is with us always! He will help with all our needs.

Passage: Acts 1:1-11 (Also see Luke 24:44-53)

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade

Materials Needed: Construction paper; glue; markers or crayons; tape; scissors; decorative supplies; balloons; cups; items related to air travel; pipe cleaners; cotton balls; Bibles.

More Resources Online

- Watch the video demonstration of the object lesson.
- Watch the video example for the craft projects.
- Watch the video Bible story "Jesus Ascension" from Saddleback Kids Club
- Watch the video Bible story "God's Story:Acts" from Crossroads Kids
- For more free illustrations, visit Christian Clip Arts and Ministry-To-Children

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Object Lesson (5 minutes)

Greet children and discuss elements of air travel…

Hello, children of God!

Have you ever traveled on an airplane? It's quite an exciting experience, especially if you're going on a vacation to a fun destination. However, there are a lot of steps involved in preparing for air travel. It takes some patience and planning to get ready for a trip on a plane. *As you discuss the following elements, use pictures or props to emphasize your points. For example, a suitcase, ticket, lists, etc.* For instance, first you have to make a list of things to pack, and get them all in your bag. Then you probably have to get up early to drive to the airport. Maybe you get a shuttle to take you from a parking lot to the airport. Then you have to go through the security line, and wait for them to check your luggage and go through the metal detector. And then you go find your gate to meet the plane, and wait awhile longer until the plane is ready. You finally get on the plane, and you still have to wait for the safety talk, and the pilot to get everything ready to take off. Then finally, after all of those steps, the plane taxis around the runway, and gets ready, and then it picks up some speed, and there's a wonderful moment when it leaves the ground and goes flying into the air! That big heavy plane gets enough power to go up into the sky, and you can watch the ground get smaller and smaller below, until you are on your way to your destination. It's a wonderful and exciting journey, but takes a lot of preparation and patience before that airplane goes up.

Well, today we are talking about something else that went up. Rather, it's someONE who went up. Did you know that Jesus went up into the sky, into Heaven? We call it the "ascension" (*invite children to repeat the word*), because ascend means "to go up." After Jesus rose from the dead, He was on Earth for a bit, teaching and sharing with the

disciples. Then, after forty days, He gathered them together, and gave them some important instructions. He told them they would have the special job of carrying on his ministry and telling others about Him. He told them they would do amazing things for Him, and they'd be able to do that because He would give them power through the sending of the Holy Spirit. But first they had to wait patiently for that Spirit to come. After He told them all that, He rose into the sky, ascending into the clouds, into Heaven. For a minute, the disciples stared up at Him, until some angels came and asked what they were looking for…The angels told them that He would be back the same way He left.

Jesus explained that someday He would return and take everyone to Heaven. Meanwhile, there's work to be done! His instructions weren't just for those disciples watching, but for all of us. Jesus has given us the essential work of spreading the Gospel to everyone, and sharing God's love and good news with the world. But we don't do it on our own. Just as that plane needs power to take off into the sky, Jesus gives us power to do His work. He didn't leave us alone, but sent His spirit to live and work in us. That spirit gives us comfort and peace, as well as power.

So now we wait. We patiently go through the steps of the tasks Jesus gave us, loving and serving others and sharing His message with them. We know He will return, and just like that plane trip, it will be amazing, better than anything we could imagine. But first we wait, eagerly and patiently ready and living in His presence daily. We look forward to going up to Heaven ourselves. In the meantime, we have work to do, and an awesome God who enables us to do it!

Why don't we pray now and thank God for His power and the presence of the Holy Spirit?

Prayer: (Invite the children to repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for preparing us a place in Heaven

And for giving us your Spirit to be with us always

Help us to carry on your work

And tell others about you

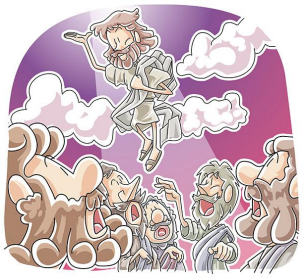
Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!

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Game & Activities Suggestions (10 minutes)



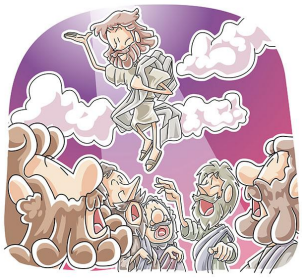
This explores how Jesus went up into Heaven, leaving His disciples (and us) with special instructions before He did so. Warm up with an activity that involves things going up or having power. Consider a few simple activities to kick things off:

- Ascension power: have students look at pictures of various things that go up into the sky, such as hot air balloons, rockets, planes, and even birds. Discuss what makes those things ascend, and introduce the fact that Jesus went up into Heaven, too, and sent us His power.
- The great balloon race: have students blow up balloons, letting them go to see how far they fly before landing. Is there any way of knowing which way they'll go?
- The great balloon mystery: let go of a helium balloon and allow it to drift to the ceiling. Have students make predictions about how long it might take for the balloon to drift back down (check in the next week, or a few days, if possible). Discuss how Jesus went up into Heaven, and we don't know how long it will be until His return to Earth, but He will come back someday!
- Into the clouds…in this passage, Jesus ascends into the clouds. Talk about various cloud types and identify pictures of them. Consider making a "cloud collage" with cotton balls!
- Making a list…provide students with a list of written instructions to do something (making a simple craft, going on a building scavenger hunt, etc.). Have them follow the instructions to complete the task. Explain that Jesus gave us instructions for a task, but also gave us all we need to carry out the job.

We have the important job of sharing the Gospel with others, but we don't do it alone! The Holy Spirit gives us power to carry on Christ's work. Today's lesson will look at our Heavenly duties and Heavenly helpers.

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Main Bible Teaching
(15 minutes)



This passage gives us the "opening act" of the book of Acts. It also explains the last words and actions of Jesus before He ascended into Heaven. It's an important episode in church history, and one that might raise questions for students. Take turns reading verses, or read them out loud for younger children.

> ***Acts 1:1-5 ESV*** *In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, (2) until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. (3) He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. (4) And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; (5) for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*

(For older students) It would be helpful to first briefly explain to students how this is the first chapter of the book of Acts, which gives us the history of the early Christian church and describes what happened to the disciples as they carried on the work of Jesus. The author of Acts is Luke, a doctor who worked with Paul, and here he addresses an audience that might be a specific individual or a group of God-lovers (as that is what "Theophilus" means).

Remind or explain to students that Jesus was on Earth for forty days after He rose from the dead. During that time, He appeared to many people to prove that He was alive. He then

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instructed His disciples to wait for the coming of the Spirit. This meant that the Spirit was worth waiting for, and that His followers could trust His promise. They would have to be patient, but knew something great was coming.

Ask: What are some things you have to wait for? Why is it sometimes hard to be patient?

> ***Acts 1:6-8 ESV*** *So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (7) He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. (8) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

The disciples are naturally curious about the plans Jesus had. They asked when He would return and restore His kingdom, but it's possible they still primarily had political thoughts in mind, rather than Godly power. Jesus explains that it is not for them to know when the end would be or what His full plans for. It's not for us to know, either. We wonder and speculate about End Times or the return of Jesus, but the truth is we don't know, and that's for the best. God will work in His own time.

However, Jesus promises that the disciples will receive power. This is not so much a command as a fact and promise. The Holy Spirit would come, and the disciples would become witnesses everywhere.

Ask: Would you want to know the future if you could? Why do you think it's best that we don't know what lies ahead?

> ***Acts 2:9-11*** *And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. (10) And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, (11) and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was*

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taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Why would Jesus depart Earth in this way? There are a few interesting things that are taking place with this Ascension. Jesus is departing up into Heaven, lifted into a cloud of glory. He wants the disciples to know that He is gone for good, not merely slipping away or disappearing. The "men" who appear (perhaps angels or maybe even Moses and Elijah) encourage the disciples not to stand staring into the clouds. It's not for them to wonder about where Jesus went or why, or speculate on His return. They are to wait and prepare to receive His spirit. There is a promise that Jesus will come back. "In the same way as you saw him go" indicates that perhaps He will return from the clouds with glory, possibly even in the same place, but we cannot know all of the details. We do know He promises to return, and has given us the power of His spirit for comfort and hope!

Ask: What is our job as Christians? How can we trust in the promises of Jesus?

Optional passage for additional or alternate instruction:

If time allows, or if you'd like to explore another Scripture option, consider using the Ascension narrative from the Gospel of Luke.

> ***Luke 24:44-49 ESV*** *Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." (45) Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, (46) and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, (47) and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (48) You are witnesses of these things. (49) And behold, I am*

sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

This is certainly not the first time that Jesus explained to His disciples who He was. Once more, He opens their minds to Scripture and reminds them why He came to Earth and how He fulfilled God's words and plans. Jesus also promises to send the Spirit to help His disciples, but instructs them to wait in Jerusalem until that help arrives.

Ask: (Question best for older students) Can you think of another time that Jesus explained who He was to the disciples?

> ***Luke 24:50-53 ESV*** *And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. (51) While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. (52) And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, (53) and were continually in the temple blessing God.*

It's worth noting that the last thing Jesus did on Earth was bestow blessing on His disciples. He was carried into heaven and left them with a job to do and encouragement to wait for His Spirit.

Ask: What would you do if you saw Jesus go up into Heaven?

Close with prayer, thanking God for sending His spirit and asking for His help in sharing His good news with others.

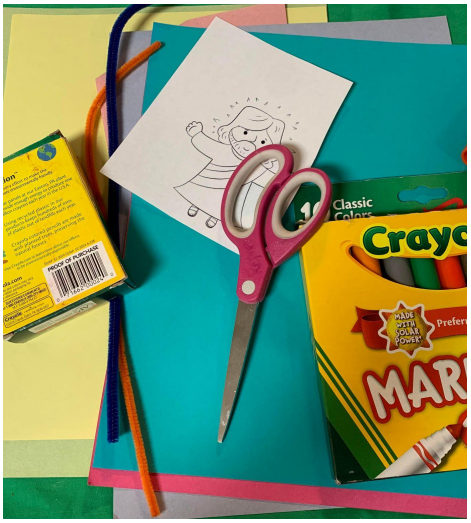
Craft Activities (15 minutes)

Jesus went up…not in an airplane or a hot air balloon, but into the clouds to prepare us a place in Heaven. Meanwhile, He left us with an important job: to tell the world about Him! These crafts celebrate the story of Jesus ascending in a fun and interactive way. A "Jesus Goes Up" poster models His rise into the skies. A "Pom-pom Pop-up Cup" incorporates a fun game with the idea of upward motion. Let's make some crafts!

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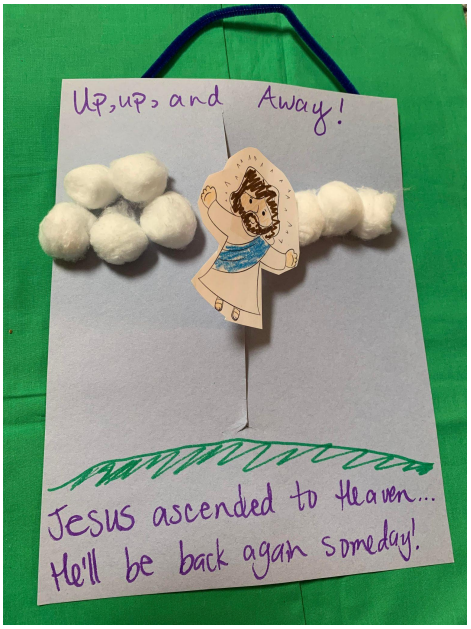
Craft one: “Jesus Going up” Poster

You will need:



- Construction paper or cardstock
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- String or pipe cleaners (optional)
- Jesus picture
- Cotton balls

Procedure:



1. Color (or draw) a small picture of Jesus, and cut out of paper
2. On a construction paper or cardstock, draw a scene similar to the farewell and Ascension of Christ.
3. Glue cotton balls to the paper as “sky” for Jesus to “go up into.”
4. Cut a slit in the middle of the paper.
5. Glue a small paper handle or popsicle stick to the back of “Jesus.”
6. Optional: Place a pipe cleaner or string at the top of the paper, if desired for hanging. Insert the Jesus image into the slit and make it slide up and down with the story!

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Craft Two: "Pop-Up Cup"

You will need:



- Construction paper or cardstock
- Small cups or toilet paper tubes
- Scissors
- Pom-poms
- Glue or tape
- Markers or crayons
- Other decorations (optional)
- Balloons



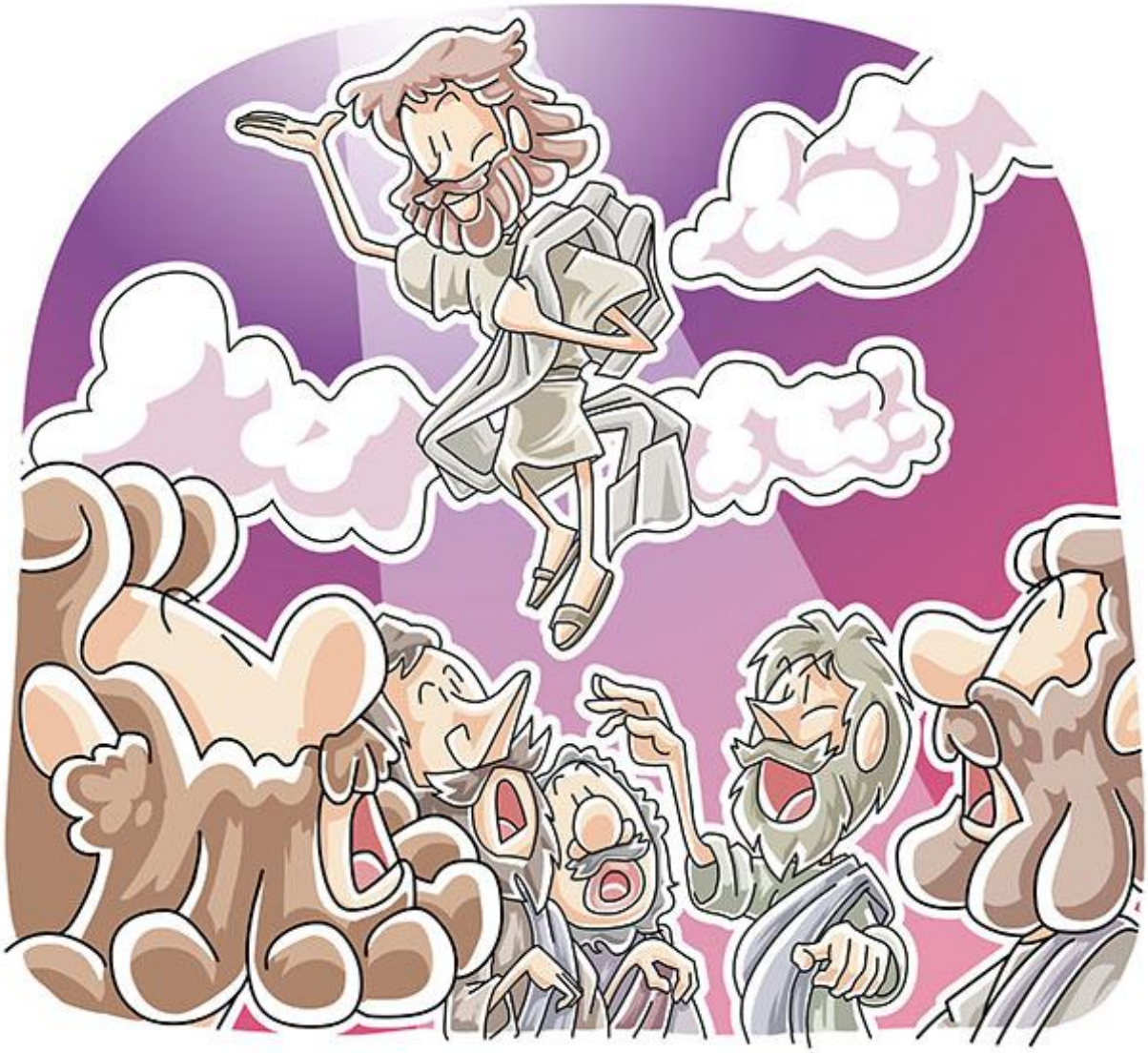
Procedure:

1. Decorate a small cardboard tube or cup, wrapping in paper or adding stickers and coloring to it.
2. Cut the bottom off of the cup, if using.
3. Tie off the end of a balloon (not inflated). Cut the opposite (non-tied) end off of the balloon.
4. Wrap the balloon around the cut end of the cup, or one end of the tube. Tape to secure, if desired.
5. Place pom-poms inside cup or tube (one at a time works best). Pull on the tied end of the balloon to launch the pom-pom into the air! For added fun, make this a game by trying to catch the pom-poms, as well.

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Luke 24:51 ESV

While He blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.





Word Search Puzzle

Apostles - Spirit - Holy - Jesus - Ascension - Baptize

Jerusalem - Israel - Authority - Judea - Cloud - Robes

A U T H O R I T Y S O

G P J E S U S I J J N

H H O L Y C R A E L E

I J G S M U A S R I B

A K P P T C E C U Z A

W U P I Q L L E S U P

A I D R R O E N A Z T

X J H I O U D S L O I

D O T T B D R I E J Z

R J U D E A I O M I E

I W M K S A B N Y Z F

Word Search Answers

