

Acts 1:1-11 The Ascension

King Jesus Returns to Heaven

- Students check in with their small group leaders and then go directly to Large group area for the weekly large group worship routine (pages 4-6).
- At the conclusion of the large group gathering and Bible telling the children will go to their age specific tent/area. Each small group leader will work with the students using the activities and Wonder Questions as a way of encouraging them to retell the story using questions and the activity.

1. To refocus the group, start by asking these two questions:

What was your favorite part of the story? Why?

Give children time to answer. We believe that God's Word is powerful and speaks for itself. Guide the discussion, listen respectfully and keep the kids on point.

2. Use the activities to help facilitate the children to talk about the Bible Story and retell it to each other.

3. Close small group time with prayer time and a blessing.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY: Tell the story without embellishment, but with dramatic inflection fitting with the story. Don't just read. Have the Bible open to the passage.

The disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had first selected them to be his disciples. He suddenly appeared and they worshiped Him. He said, "I give you authority to preach. Go to all the nations and make disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teach them what I have taught you. Remember, I'm always with you."

For 40 days after He rose from the dead, Jesus spent time with his disciples teaching them things about the kingdom of God. He also appeared to many others, once to a crowd of over 500 people. He then led his disciples to the Mount of Olives. He said, "Don't leave Jerusalem until you receive the promise from the Father. John baptized with water, but now you'll be baptized with the Holy Spirit." They said, "Lord, is now the time you're going to make Israel into a kingdom again?"

Jesus said, "Only the Father knows when that will happen. Meanwhile, you're to spread the good news that people can receive forgiveness of sins. Wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes upon you. He'll give you power to spread this good news. Start in Jerusalem and then take it to the entire nation. Include Samaria. Finally, go to the entire world." Jesus then blessed them.

As he did, he suddenly moved upward and disappeared in a cloud. The disciples stood there looking up. Two men, dressed in white, appeared next to them. They said, "Why are you standing there looking into the sky? You saw Jesus go up. He'll come back in the same way."

So the disciples went back into Jerusalem. Their hearts overflowed with joy! They met in an upper room with other believers, both men and women. Mary, the mother of Jesus was there, as well as his brothers. All of the believers were of one mind and spent this time in prayer.

ACTIVITIES:

Smaller groups can rotate to three various stations to retell the story to each other using these activity prompts – one at each station.

OR All three activities are available for each group in their small group time and small group leaders can use one or more of the options to help students retell the story

1. Using Bubbles to show the difference between a heavenly body and an earthly body.

Since we know that Jesus didn't turn into a ghost, and that he is coming back the same way he left, we are going to do some experiments with 'bubbles' to show how things can be the same but different just like Jesus is still in a body, but different. IF a child wants to try making special bubbles, he/she must re-tell the story first.



Using both regular bubbles and these “plastic bubbles” have the kids tell the story and compare the difference. Make the comparison between our earthly bodies (like regular bubbles) and the resurrection bodies will look just like them, but will be different (like the plastic bubbles). Once the child has successfully made a plastic bubble have the student hit the plastic bubble so it goes up high and then should say the words about how Jesus went up into the heavens. Then as the bubble floats back down they should say that the angels say that Jesus will return just like he left. It's really fun!

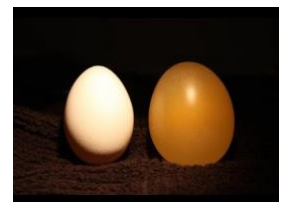
2. Using magic “smoke” to talk about the cloud that covered Jesus and/or how the “finger smoke” is like the cloud that is the presence of God and not a regular cloud.

Put a small amount of the “goo” on your thumb. Rub in a circular motion using your index and middle fingers against the thumb. The goo should start to feel “warm.” Then with a snapping motion pull your fingers away from the thumb. Puffs of “smoke” should float up from your fingers/thumb. Kids LOVE doing this. Be sure that they actually retell a piece of the story before getting the honor of using the goo to do so.



3. Huddle Leaders may use the “rubber egg” to show how the egg is still an egg but has been changed to something different – like the resurrected Christ still has a body but it is a changed body.

Find instructions for making these eggs in advance at www.stevespangler.com and watch the video <https://youtu.be/fEYS5i5P7YY>



Refer to the WONDER QUESTIONS (page 3) to help the students reflect on the story and how they relate to the activities.

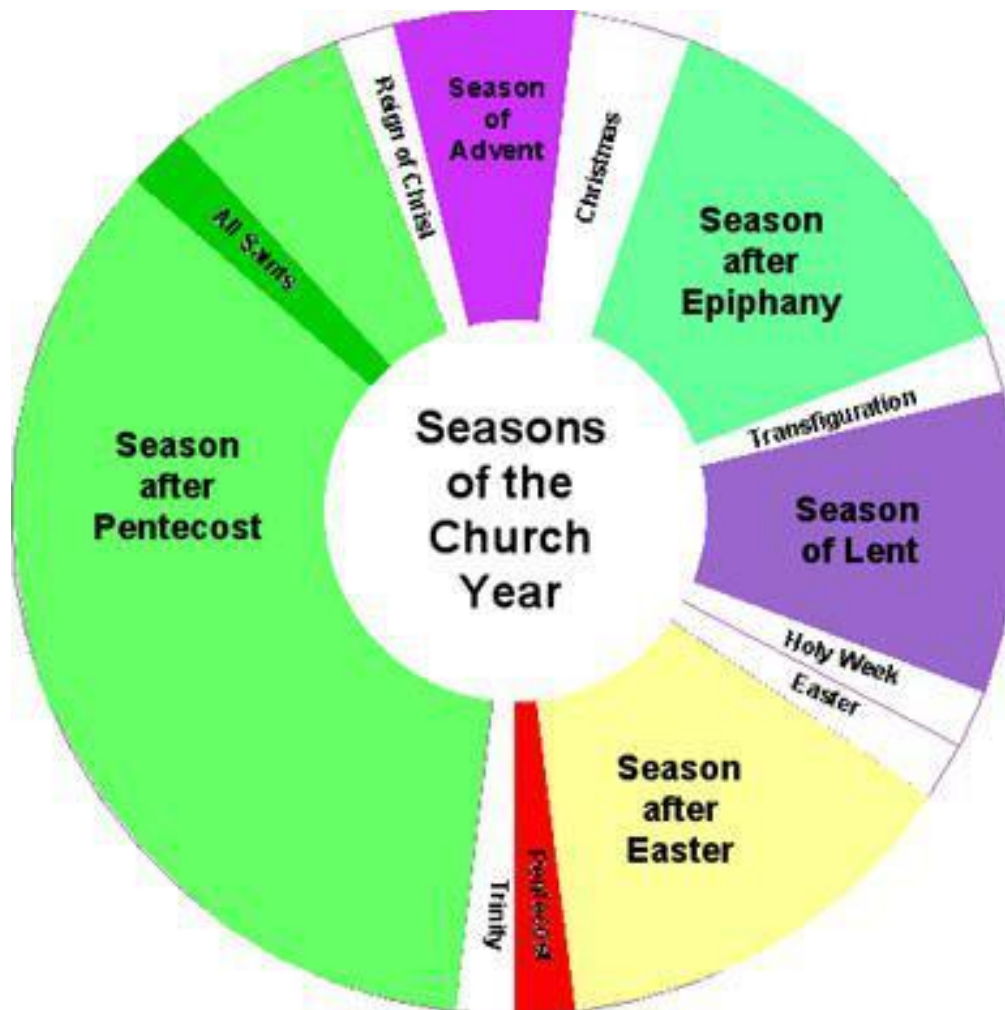
WONDER QUESTIONS:

During the activity time pose some of these questions so that there is time for the students to reflect on the story they heard and are re-telling.

1. What did this story make you wonder about?
2. What do you think happened to Jesus?
3. How do you think his heavenly body works in the world and in heaven?
4. Why did Jesus need a new body?
5. What other places in the Bible are their stories about Clouds? (*Cloud of smoke that led the Israelites in the wilderness; God's presence as a cloud in the Tabernacle and the Temple in the Holy of Holies; Cloud of God's presence at the Transfiguration*)
6. Why do you think it's important to know that Jesus still has a body?
7. If Jesus is in heaven, how do you think God is here helping us?
8. How does this story relate to the Apostles' Creed?

Basic Sunday Morning Teaching Routine For Elementary Sunday School

First Find a Liturgical Calendar that you can refer to each week: (sample below)



The Routine: This can be done in a large group before children go into small groups or it can be done in individual classrooms depending on your church's style. This routine is for elementary age classes.

Children do best with routine and ritual so make use of the following ritual each time you meet. Each time you gather, start the Children's discipleship time with a large group time. I use PowerPoint to put up the various aspects of the morning ritual, including the picture of the Church Seasons (see above), Doxology, Apostles' Creed, 10 Commandments and sometimes illustrations that go with the Bible story.

Have a small table at the front of the room with a tablecloth with the appropriate church year season's color. Have a large candle and an offering basket on the sides of the table leaving room for a Bible to be placed in the center.

Have a Bible at the back of the room that will be carried forward.

Say "*What's the first thing we do every week?*" and wait for them to tell you that the Bible needs to come to the table.

Tell the children to be very quiet as you ask an older child to get the Bible and bring it forward. Once the Bible is placed on the table the child turns to the group and says "*Let us Worship God*" and sits down.

Say: "*What is the next thing we do?*" and wait for someone to say we need to light the Christ Candle.

Pick a volunteer who then lights the candle and says "*This is the Light of Christ*".

Say: "*What is the next thing we do?*" and wait for someone to say we need to remember the Water of our Baptism.

Pick a student to come and pour a little water from a small pitcher into a small bowl and say "*Remember the water of baptism*"

We then take the offering, and I ask the students to tell me what the offering is used for and why we give. Don't teach this, just encourage their answers.

Next have the children stand and sing the Doxology.

Take time each week to take a phrase of the Doxology and ask the children what they think the words mean. Do not belabor the point. Do not teach it, let them tell you what they think and steer their thoughts.

Next say "*Who knows what a world-view is?*" Give them time to think up something. My fourth graders had no trouble coming up with ideas. Stay away from gimmicks like colored glasses or telescopes as these "object lessons" are not beneficial to children and only tend to confuse them.

Again, steer the conversation and pick up where they go, bringing them back to the point of starting to recite the Apostles' Creed (and once they know this one move to the Nicene Creed). Put the Apostles' Creed up visually (PowerPoint) and read the entire Creed together out loud.

Then tell the story of the day. I use the narratives as crafted from the text found at www.bibletelling.org but I do often use the Contemporary English Version. Use your open Bible. *Don't memorize the story*, tell it without verbal embellishments. I like to use art work from classic paintings so that the visuals are not cartoons or caricatures as this diminishes the truthfulness of the Biblical text. Children should learn that the stories of Scripture were real within time and space in history. Since we believe that the Word is "alive and active" try to stay true to "The Word" and let God speak through it. *(If ever supplementing with DVDs please only use Nest Entertainment Animated Bible Stories as these are true to the text and the animation is historically realistic. Once and a while I use portions from "What's in the Bible with Buck Denver" but usually this is for special occasions when our classes stay together and eat popcorn ☺)* You may also find great visuals from <http://www.freebibleimages.org>

Once the story has been told have the children go into their small groups for activity and Wonder Question time with their small group leader.