

AN ASCENDING TRUTH

Jesus
Ascends
Acts 1:1–11;
Luke 24:44–53
AD 33

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus ascended to heaven.

BIBLE VERSE

[Jesus says,] “I am with you always.” Matthew 28:20

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that Jesus’ earthly body rose into heaven, where He prepares a place for me to be with Him forever.

LAW & GOSPEL

We live as though Jesus is not active in our lives and the world.

Jesus bodily ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us, promising always to be with us.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

During His last days on earth, Jesus instructs His disciples, preparing them for the challenges that lie ahead. Gathering His disciples on the Mount of Olives one last time, Jesus physically ascends to heaven. Two angels repeat Christ’s promise to return in the same way He ascended into heaven.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Acts 1:1–11; Luke 24:44–53 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read the section “The Second Article (Part 3)” in *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017).

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- Helium balloon (optional)
- Printed and cut small pictures of Jesus
- Cotton balls
- Pinwheels and paper fans
- Digital device
- Globe or map
- Pudding cups and whipped topping
- Bowl for water and towels
- Inflated balloons and large sheet

FOR EVERY LESSON

- Bible
- Device with prepped music
- Copies of downloadable activity page
- Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

PRAY

Dear Lord Jesus, help us remember that You are with us always. In Your name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** On a whiteboard or large sheet of paper, make a chart with three columns: Who, What (are they doing), and Where. After you have read the story, as a group (or in small groups), fill in the columns with the details of this account. Older students could do a similar activity but do it independently.
- FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE OLDER** Play a witnessing game by choosing a couple of Bible verses for students to share. Play the first round by having one student share the first verse with two individuals by whispering the verse to them. Those two people should each tell the verse to two more people. Keep going till everyone has heard the verse. Ask the last people to hear the message to share what they heard. How well did the message get communicated? Then play a second round, but this time have the first student show their first two witnesses the verse in the Bible. Then have those two students each show two more until everyone has seen the verse. Why is it important for people to both hear God's Word and also have it available to them in writing?

SAY

- Jesus is our special friend. Today, we will hear how Jesus went back to His home in heaven and the special promise He gave before He left.**
- What are things that you know that float up into the sky? (If you brought a helium balloon, let it float up to the ceiling now.) In our Bible narrative today, we're going to learn about Jesus' ascension, or going up, into heaven.**

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- Where did Jesus go?
- Is He still with us?
- What does Jesus want us to do?
- How does He help us?
- Will Jesus come back again?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- Jesus' time on earth in His physical body had come to an end. Jesus went to be with His Father in heaven, but He didn't get there the way we do, by dying—He conquered death! Jesus was just lifted up into heaven.
- Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to His disciples and to us, giving us faith, forgiveness, and new life in Him. He helps us tell others about Him.
- Jesus is preparing a place for us with Him in heaven. He will one day return and take all believers to heaven.
- Even though we can't physically see Jesus anymore, He is very much present in His Word, in Baptism, and in the Lord's Supper.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ ascended to the Father in heaven. He continues to work through the Holy Spirit, giving us faith, forgiveness, and eternal life.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: Sing the song at the end of the story. Sing it again and have children join in.

God sent His Son, Jesus, from heaven to be our friend and helper. He came as a little baby. He grew up and helped many people. He taught them about God and His love. Then Jesus suffered and died on the cross to pay for our sins. He came alive again on Easter. Jesus showed Himself to His friends many times so they would know He was alive. Now His work on earth was finished, and He was ready to go back home to heaven.

One day, Jesus and His helpers walked up a hill. He told his friends to sit down while He talked to them. He had some important things to tell them.

Jesus said, “I am going to send you the Holy Spirit. He will help you tell others about Me.” Then Jesus said, “Go everywhere and tell people about Me. Tell them I died on the cross to take away their sins. Tell them I became alive again. Tell them My Father and I love them very much. Baptize people in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And remember, I am with You always.”

While Jesus talked to His friends, He began to go up into the sky. Up, up, up He went. Soon His friends couldn’t see Jesus anymore. Some clouds came and covered Him up.

Jesus’ friends kept looking up to try to see Him. Two angels came and said, “Why are you looking up into the sky? Someday Jesus will come back again.”

Then the friends remembered Jesus wasn’t really gone. He was still with them, even though they couldn’t see Him. That made Jesus’ friends happy. They knew Jesus would be with them when they told people about God’s love.

Jesus is with us too. He helps us show love for others. Let’s sing a song about that. Sing these words to the tune of “Jesus Loves Me.”

**Jesus loves me! Hip hooray! He is with me every day.
He’s at school, at play, at home. I am never all alone.
Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus
loves me. The Bible tells me so.**

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

After Jesus’ resurrection, He appeared to His disciples many times. He spoke to them about the kingdom of God. Jesus wanted the disciples to know that His work of salvation was finished.

Jesus told them that everything that had been written about Him in the Old Testament Scriptures had been fulfilled. He opened their minds to understand Scripture. When Jesus returned to heaven, He would prepare a place for those who believe in Him.

Forty days after the resurrection, Jesus led His disciples to a hill outside of Bethany called the Mount of Olives. Jesus told the disciples that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit would come upon them. The disciples would be His witnesses. They would tell about the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting to people in Jerusalem and many other places.

When Jesus had said these things, He suddenly started to rise up, up, up, off the ground. While they watched, He rose

higher and higher into the air until He went up through the clouds and left them. A cloud took Him out of sight.

Now Jesus sits at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. He prays for us and rules everything that happens in the whole world for the good of His Church.

While the disciples were gazing into heaven, two men stood by them. They were angels in white robes. The angels said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come again in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.”

Then, the disciples returned to Jerusalem and went to the temple to worship God. They were joyful that they were not alone. They waited eagerly for the gift of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus had promised to them.

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

Who Is Missing, Who Is Here?

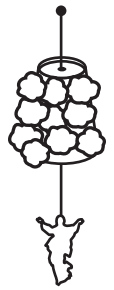
Ask a child to hide in the room. Sing this song to the tune of “Are You Sleeping?”

Who is missing? Who is missing? Can you tell? Can you tell? Look around the circle. Look around the circle. Who is gone? Who is gone? Let children guess, then call the hiding child to join you. Say, **[Amy] was here all the time. We just didn’t see her. Jesus is also here. We can’t see Him, but He is with us wherever we go.**



Jesus Ascends Craft

Find a small picture of Jesus online and print and cut out one for each child. Glue pulled-apart cotton balls to a paper cup for clouds. Punch a hole in the top of the Jesus picture. Tie yarn to it. Poke a hole in the base of the cup and insert yarn through it so Jesus shows at the bottom. Tie a bead to the end of the yarn. Pull up to make Jesus disappear in the clouds. Talk about how Jesus went back to heaven, but He promised to still be with us always.



Where the Wind Blows

Set out pinwheels, paper fans, and inflated balloons. Let children blow on the items or fan them. Say, **We can’t see the air moving, but we know it is there because we can see what it does. Jesus is with us here, too, even though we can’t see Him.**



End of the Earth

The “end of the earth” (Acts 1:8) covers a lot of territory. Visit lcms.org/missionaries to see where some of our missionaries share the Gospel today. Find places on a globe or map. Are any of them in places that seem like the “end of the earth”?



Pudding Cloud Snack

Serve snack-size cups of pudding with a dollop of whipped topping. Say, **Today, we’re having pudding under a cloud. When Jesus went back to heaven, clouds covered Jesus so His friends couldn’t see Him anymore.**



Science Fun

Take a bowl of water and towels and go outside. Have children take off socks and shoes, dip feet in the water, then walk on the concrete. Watch the footprints disappear. Ask, **Where did they go?** Talk about evaporation. Say, **Jesus will never go away. Though we can’t see Him, He promises to be with us always.**



Up, Up, Up

Put balloons in a large sheet. Children hold edges of sheet and move it up and down. How high can they go? Say, **At Jesus’ ascension, He was lifted up into heaven. Jesus will come back again one day to take us to be with Him in heaven. He promises to be with us now, even though we can’t see Him.**



LEAVE

SAY

Jesus ascended to heaven to prepare a place for us, but He also promises to be with us always. Amazing! Wonderful! Like the disciples, we have big reasons to be joyful and praise God.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, You came as a human to fulfill Scripture and be our Savior. Then You ascended to heaven to sit on the right hand of God the Father and prepare a place for us. Give us the boldness to tell everyone about Your death and resurrection and the joy of worshipping You. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.