

Sunday morning
teaching plan

Date:
26th April
2026

TITLE:	The Ascension
THEME:	The Life of Jesus
AIM:	To consider the meaning of Jesus leaving and the introduction of the Holy Spirit.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The disciples had spent three years with Jesus; seeing Him teach, heal, and even rise from the dead. So when He appeared to them after the resurrection, they thought they knew what was coming next. They expected Jesus to take over politically, defeat the Romans, and become a visible king they could follow.

But Jesus had a much bigger plan.

Then Jesus was taken up and hidden by a cloud. This isn't floating into space, but entering God's realm of authority. He became invisible, but not absent. In fact, through the Holy Spirit, He would become more present than ever before.

Two angels told the disciples to stop staring into the sky. Jesus hadn't disappeared. He had begun His reign, and now the disciples had work to do.

The Ascension is the moment Jesus moves from being physically with a few people in one place, to being spiritually present with every believer, everywhere.

WARM UP

Disappear

In the garden everyone spreads out. Get someone in charge and they have to shout disappear and everyone has 10 seconds to disappear. The person in charge has to stand in the same place and call out if they can see anyone. Additional layers to the games:

- **Disappear into the garden!** They must blend into the environment — hide behind trees, garden toys etc. They can't be seen
- **Disappear into a person!** They pair up and hide *behind* someone else's body shape.
- **Disappear into an object!** They pose as if they *are* an object (lamp, coat rack, plant, speaker, etc). They become an object.
- **Disappear into a shadow!** They must find or create a shadow and hide inside it.
- **Disappear into a shape!** You call a shape (triangle, star, circle) and they contort themselves to disappear into it.
- **Disappear in plain sight!** They freeze completely still like a statue.

Elimination

Anyone still moving after 10 seconds, or not convincingly disappeared, is out.

MAIN TEACHING

The Ascension

Read **Acts 1:6–11**

Listen for:

- What the disciples expect
- What Jesus actually says
- What the angels correct

Questions:

1. What are the disciples expecting from Jesus here?

Notes:

They're still thinking politically. They are imagining Jesus overthrowing Rome and creating a national kingdom via a visible political takeover. They haven't yet understood that Jesus' kingdom is global, not national and His rule is spiritual and eternal. His mission is transformation of lives through His salvation and not a momentary domination of the current oppressive authority.

To note here is that the disciples show that you can be close to Jesus and still misunderstand His mission.

2. Why doesn't Jesus answer their question directly?

Notes:

Jesus redirects them from speculation to mission. The disciples want timelines, control and certainty. But the reality is that they would probably have been disappointed if Jesus told them the truth about their expectations. Jesus instead gives them a purpose and calling far beyond what they are looking and then of course the power to be about to do it all.

He says: *"You will receive power... and you will be my witnesses."*

Where Did Jesus Go?

- Jesus didn't float into space.
- The cloud represents God's presence (like in Exodus).
- Jesus entered heaven which is God's realm of authority, not a location above the clouds.

3. What does it mean that Jesus is at God's right hand?

Notes:

This is symbolic. To sit at the right hand means the highest honour and ultimate authority of someone who is in active rule.

For help read **Psalm 110:1**

This is the clearest Old Testament picture of the Messiah being enthroned at God's right hand which is a position of authority, honour, and active rule.

and **Ephesians 1:20-21**

This emphasis's that Jesus reigns over all powers ruling now in an active way and not passive. The Ascension is not Jesus leaving us but instead the fulfilment of Jesus being crowned King.

Visible vs Invisible

Get them to write down or consider in pairs things that they can't see but they know are real. For example, wind, electricity, The other side of the world. And then write next to it the reason they know it is real. (see the trees bending in the wind, feel it on skin etc, because someone told us about it).

4. How can we apply this to Jesus? We can't see Him so how do we know that he is real?

Jesus is no longer visible but more powerful and present than ever.

Why Did Jesus Leave?

Read **John 16:7**.

5. Why was it better for Jesus to go?

Notes:

It feels wrong because we think physically that having Jesus here would be best. But Jesus says the opposite.

- 1. Physical presence is limited. If Jesus stayed He'd be in one place and only some people could access Him.*
- 2. The Spirit multiplies His presence through the Holy Spirit. Jesus is now present with all believers, everywhere and all the time.*
- 3. The mission expands. The plan was never to stay with Jesus in one place. The plan was to bring Jesus to the world.*

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

6. Who is the Holy Spirit?

Notes:

The Spirit is not a vibe, a feeling or a force. He is fully God, personal and active. He speaks, leads, convicts, empowers. The Spirit is God present in us, continuing Jesus' work.

Before & After

Read a short summary of Luke 22 & John 20:

When Jesus was arrested, His disciples were afraid and ran away. One of His closest followers, Peter, was so scared that he denied even knowing Jesus—three times.

After Jesus died, the disciples hid behind locked doors because they were afraid of the authorities. Even though they had heard Jesus was alive, they were confused, unsure, and didn't know what to do next.

Read a short summary of Acts 2 & 4:

After the Holy Spirit came, the disciples went out into the streets and began speaking boldly about Jesus.

Peter, stood up in front of a huge crowd and told them clearly that Jesus is alive and Lord. Thousands of people believed.

Even when they were warned and threatened to stop, they refused. Instead, they prayed for more boldness—and kept speaking about Jesus without fear.

Split into groups and write down in two columns with the headers BEFORE the Holy Spirit and AFTER the Holy Spirit

Write down in each column the difference in the disciples in their:

- Attitudes (how they felt)
- Actions (what they did)
- Words (what they said or didn't say)

Suggestions:

BEFORE: Afraid, Hiding, Confused, Denying Jesus, Silent, Passive, Unsure of purpose.

AFTER: Bold, Public, Confident, Speaking clearly about Jesus, Willing to take risks, Purposeful, United.

7. What is the biggest difference you notice?

Notes:

The shift is from fear to boldness and from passivity to action.

This isn't a small personality tweak but it's a complete transformation. The same people who ran away are now standing in public speaking with courage. That tells us something big changed for all of them and it wasn't trying hard but it must be from the power of the Holy Spirit at work in them.

8. Could the disciples have made this change on their own?

Notes:

Unlikely. Just weeks earlier, they had already failed under pressure. Fear had already won.

What changed wasn't their intelligence, their training or their circumstances but instead the presence of God within them. This shows that the Christian life is not about self-improvement; striving to be something better but it is about allowing the Holy Spirit to work in us more. We can do this by submitting to God and, spending time with Him and allowing the Holy Spirit to be more active in our lives. We can spend time trying to hear the Holy Spirit in us and what God is saying through Him.

9. What does this say about what the Holy Spirit can do in someone's life?

Notes:

Having the Spirit living in us means that we don't have to strive and stumble to achieve what God wants for us. It is God living in us which is quite extraordinary.

Romans 8:11 says: 'The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you.' And it is this same Spirit that changed the disciples and is promised to us today.

TAKEAWAY

- What would change if you really believed the Spirit is in you?

EXTRA INFORMATION