

JESUS IS OUR SAVIOR

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

RESURRECTION DISCIPLE DEAD WITNESS RAISE LIFE HEAVEN

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Mark 16:15-16 and 19-20 plus Luke 24:36-53

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the students know that Jesus' disciples saw him return to heaven after God raised him from the dead.

MEMORY VERSE

"God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it" (Acts 2:32, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Why do we spend so much time emphasizing the resurrection of Jesus to elementary-aged children? Because they are growing up in a world that emphasizes acceptance of other beliefs as valid. This concept is stated in several ways: "I believe that different religions are good ways to reach God," or "Christianity is good for Christians, but other religions are good too," or "Who am I to say that my religion is the only correct one?" Given this spiritual climate, it is never too early to teach children the vital truths about the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

First, children need to know that only Christians have a resurrected and living Lord.

Second, they need to understand that even though Jesus is not with us bodily, he is with us through the Holy Spirit. He always continues to work in our lives.

And finally, we want children to start caring about people - some of those people are really sincere - who do not believe in Jesus. They will be eternally lost unless someone helps them know Christ and receive him as their Savior. Whether or not they're ready to testify of Christ to their unbelieving friends, learning and deepening the fundamental concepts of faith while they're small will help them shape their lives in a Christian way.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

The biblical passages that we'll consider are about "endings" because they talk about the last days of Jesus on earth before his ascension. They also speak of "beginnings" - the new age of the kingdom of God on earth - and the evangelization of the world.

Read Luke 24:36-43. The events of this passage occurred the night of resurrection Sunday. And although there was a varied number and type of reports on this, the disciples doubted considerably that Jesus was alive. Those doubts were perhaps began to dissipate as they listened to the report of the men of Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). However, they had not yet disappeared completely.

While the disciples were discussing the Emmaus report, Jesus suddenly appeared to them. John tells us that they were in a place with the doors locked (20:19). Therefore, it was obvious that Jesus had entered in a different way than normal. In his resurrected body, Jesus was free from earthly limitations. He offered various tests to prove that he was not a ghost. He allowed them to touch his body, which was solid, it was human flesh, and let them examine his wounds. He also ate something, which a ghost could not do. Finally, the disciples were convinced.

Read Luke 24:44-49 and Mark 16:15-16. The events that Luke mentions occurred after the resurrection. We know from Acts 1:3 that Jesus remained on earth 40 days more. During that time, he appeared to his disciples and to other people on various occasions. As the passage indicates, Jesus instructed his disciples in the Old Testament teachings about the Messiah, helping them understand that he was the fulfillment of those prophecies. Most notable was Jesus' emphasis on the truth of the crucifixion and the resurrection. These historical facts are the heart of the apostles' preaching in the book of Acts.

Both Luke and Mark spoke of the message that Jesus wanted his disciples to preach, but they emphasized different ideas. Luke spoke about repentance and the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ. Mark emphasized the need to believe in Jesus. As the disciples knew, believing in Jesus was not easy; but it was and is absolutely essential for salvation.

Read Luke 24:50-53 and Mark 16:19-20. The last moments of the Master on this earth were spent in the vicinity of his greatest sufferings and triumphs. The triumphal entry, the blessing of the children, the resurrection of Lazarus, Gethsemane and his crucifixion, death and resurrection, all happened in Jerusalem and its vicinity. While Jesus was preparing to leave the earth, he affirmed his promise of the Holy Spirit and blessed his disciples. Then, while they watched, Jesus ascended to heaven. For him and his disciples, that was the "end" of a world changing historical time. In the same way, this was the beginning of another historical time.

Jesus would continue to minister in and through people through the Holy Spirit. Authorized and sent by Jesus, the disciples would take to the whole known world the message of the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, who loves the world and provides complete salvation for all who believe in him and accept him as their Savior.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Important words

Write on cards the important words of this session. On one side write the word "ascension" and on the opposite side write down its meaning: the Lord Jesus was received up into heaven and sat at the right hand (right side) of God (Luke 16:19).

"Witness": a person who witnesses an event. The disciples witnessed the ascension of Jesus to heaven. They would continue to tell all the people what they saw and learned from the Master. That's why we can now worship the Lord, because others told us the beautiful story of the ascension.

Hide the cards in the room before the session starts. Ask the children to find them. When they have found them, they should read them (perhaps with your help) and say what each word means. Then they can choose another child to whom they will pass the card, and so on until everyone has read the words and their meaning.

TEACH THE LESSON

Where is Jesus?

Read Mark 16:15-16 and 19-20 plus Luke 24:36-53.

In a locked room in the city of Jerusalem, Jesus' disciples and their friends were sitting and talking. Everyone was scared, sad, confused and at the same time, excited. Two of Jesus' followers from Emmaus had just run into that room. "Jesus lives!" they exclaimed excitedly. "He walked with us all the way to Emmaus, but we did not know who he was. Then we invited him to eat dinner with us. We asked him to pray, and when he started to pray, we finally recognized him. Jesus lives!"

"That cannot be true," the disciples argued. "Jesus died. We saw that he died. People do not come back to life after being dead for three days!" "But it is true," the two men insisted. While they were talking, Jesus appeared in the room. "Peace to you," he said. "It is a spirit!" someone said. Everyone trembled with fear. "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts come to your minds?" Jesus asked. "Look at my hands and my feet. I'm myself; touch me and see." Now, the disciples had to believe the Good News. He was not a ghost. It was Jesus, and he really was alive!

During the next 40 days, Jesus appeared to the disciples on several occasions. He told them about all the things that had happened. He showed them the Old Testament scriptures that spoke of his crucifixion and resurrection, and he began to tell his friends about the important task he wanted them to do. "You have seen everything that happened to me," said Jesus. "Now I want you to go all over the world and preach the Good News to all people. Tell people that if they leave their sins, they will be forgiven. He who believes in me will be saved. But those who refuse to believe in me, will not be."

"Must we begin to believe now?" the apostles asked themselves. Jesus answered their questions quickly. "I will send you the Holy Spirit, as I promised you. But for now stay in Jerusalem until you have received power from God." Those 40 days went by quickly. How the disciples wished to be with Jesus one more time! Then one day, he led them all to a special place on the Mount of Olives. And raising his hands, he asked for the blessing of the Father. While he was talking, he began to ascend (go up) into heaven. And in a few moments, he disappeared. The disciples never saw him again on this earth.

Were they sad? Maybe a little, in the same way that happens to us when someone we love leaves. But the disciples were also full of joy. Jesus lives! Soon he would send the Holy Spirit to be with them all the time. And what was more important: the disciples had a job to do. They were to tell everyone that Jesus was alive and that He would forgive all their sins if they asked Him.

CONNECT THE LESSON

"Jesus lives!"

Have the children cut out and assemble the figures from Student Activity Sheet #225-A and #225-B. When they have finished assembling, tell them: "Tell each other and me the story of the ascension. Try to do it at home and with your friends at school. Remember to thank God because Jesus went to heaven and is sitting next to his Father."

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Write the memory verse from back to front on the board. Ask some volunteers to come up and write it again, but this time in the correct order.

Sweet verses

You will need: Student Activity Sheet #214-C and #214-D, a (candy) jar, scissors, construction paper larger than the jar, and colored pencils or crayons. Throughout the year, you will find additional cut outs as the memory verse for each unit, in candy or candy forms with the verses written on each one. When a child has memorized the memory verse, allow him/ her to cut out the candy from that unit and stick it inside or around the jar. At the end of the year, they will be able to take the jar with "sweets" to their homes. That way they can repeat to their families the verses they learned.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Invite the children to pray. Ask them: "Do you know of someone who does not know Jesus?" Allow them to name familiar people, friends, or family members. Then, divide the children into pairs. Each child will pray for the family member or friend of the other who does not know Jesus. Finish with a prayer for the names expressed by the children and asking the Lord to make them courageous to be witnesses of Jesus, as were the disciples.

Encourage

Encourage the children to tell others that Jesus was resurrected and now lives with the Father.

Invite

Before they depart, tell the children that they will begin a new unit during the next session. Remind them that this is a good time to invite others to join the group.