**FIRST STEPS TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Session 4 of 4

# Ascension

### MEETING AIM

To share the challenge that Jesus gave to his disciples when he was preparing to leave them, and explore how we can take Jesus’ story out with us too.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 1:1-11

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your particular situation.

This is a story scant on detail, begging questions as to how prepared or otherwise the disciples must have felt as Jesus ended his time on earth. In this text, we see Jesus passing the baton on to those who had been closest to him, preparing them to take his message out into the world. Through this session, we explore how we, too, are invited to take the story out and pass the baton on.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Start your time together with some simple refreshments (if you can) and ask the children to think of a time when they have had to say goodbye. Was it a sad goodbye or a good goodbye? What helps us to say goodbye?

### PLAY – 10 mins

**You will need:** something to use as a baton

Play some simple relay races around your house or meeting space – make your course as simple or as complicated as you like (and which is safe). If you’re online, play the shopping list memory game: “Today I went to the shops and I bought…” passing the sentence on from player to player. When a child forgets something, just start again, so that it’s easier for younger children.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** felt shapes to use for the telling of the story – a blue sky background, a green piece to represent the ground, Jesus and disciples, angels, clouds

Depending upon the size of your group, you will need to decide whether to lay the story out on the floor or put it up on display, perhaps using an easel. Spread the background out and gather the children so that they can see. As you begin the story, lay the green grass at the foot of the picture and slowly set out the people figures, gathered together around Jesus to one side of the scene. Tell the story:

When Jesus rose from the dead, he spent 40 days on earth. He would appear and talk to his disciples once again, reminding them of the things he had taught them. He told his disciples to stay in Jerusalem and wait for God’s promised Holy Spirit. Jesus’ disciples still had questions for Jesus; they were still waiting for him to become king and wanted to know when Jesus would finish the work he had started. Jesus told them that only Father God knew how the story would end and that everything would happen in God’s perfect timing.

One day, Jesus gathered his friends together. *Move the figures to the centre of the scene.* He told them that he would be returning home to Father God in heaven. But the disciples’ work was not yet finished. Jesus told them that they were to wait for the Holy Spirit and then they should take Jesus’ story out to the whole world, telling people about the work that Jesus had done on earth, his death and resurrection.

When he had said this, Jesus was taken up into the clouds. *Move the shapes appropriately.* He was hidden from the people. The disciples looked up into the sky, and as they waited, two angels appeared. *Add these figures to the scene.* They told the disciples not to wait there for Jesus, he had now returned to heaven, and one day he would come back the same way. This would be the last time the disciples would ever see Jesus on earth, but they knew they still had work to do. They would wait for the Holy Spirit to come before going out and sharing his story the world over.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, making sure everyone has the chance to contribute:

* What is your favourite part of this story?
* What questions do you have about this story?
* How do you think the disciples would have felt when Jesus left them?
* What does it mean for us to wait for Jesus to return?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** a crown; a globe; a house; a clock; playdough

Show the objects and ask the children to choose something that stands out to them after hearing the story. Which of these objects speaks to them the most? What did they hear in the story that made them think about this?

Provide some playdough so that the children can create their own object. Gather together the children’s chosen or created symbols and look together at how the objects help to tell us the story. What challenges us from these objects? How might God be talking to us through these symbols?

### PRAYER – 5 mins

As you gather to pray, stand together in a circle, facing inwards and holding hands if the children are happy to do so. Begin by praying for the children in the group; perhaps inviting the children to share their own prayers, thanking God for the things they have discovered during this session. Pray specifically that the Holy Spirit would come and fill each of us with the same power he gave to the first disciples. Now turn the circle around and face outwards. Pray that we would have the courage we need to take Jesus’ story out into the world and share Jesus with our friends and family this week.

**BECKY MAY**

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