



49. Commission



Acts 1:3-11, Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus commissions his disciples to spread the word and make more disciples, before ascending to heaven



To help the children reflect on Jesus' call to his followers to make disciples and to understand that even though they wouldn't see him physically any more he would still be with them as he was going to send the Holy Spirit.

Jesus commissioned his disciples to continue his work by making more disciples. Then he ascended to heaven but promised that he would still be with his followers by sending the Holy Spirit.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- How do you feel about Jesus' command to make disciples?
- How are you doing this?
- How does Jesus' promise to be with his followers help you in this? Take some time to pray for your group.



Choose one or more of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

Mirror Game

Get the children to divide into pairs and to stand facing their partner. One child should perform a series of actions, while their partner should copy them, pretending to be a mirror image. After a couple of minutes let them switch so the other person is leading.

If you have time, you could get them to come up with a short routine and then allow some of the pairs to do their routine while the other children copy it in their pairs.

Drawing Game

You will need: paper, pens or pencils, picture (from additional document: Drawing Game)

Give each of the children a piece of paper, and provide pens or pencils. The leader should hold the picture and describe it while the children attempt to recreate the picture on their own sheet of paper. (You can decide whether you want to include the colours of the shapes as part of the description, or whether you want to simply focus on the shapes.)

As you describe the picture, try to keep questions from the children to a minimum. Just keep describing the picture and encourage them to try to keep up. Once you have finished, get the children to show their pictures, and see

(continued overleaf)

who managed to get the closest to the original.

Coordinates Puzzle

You will need printouts from additional document: Coordinates Puzzle, pencils

Give the children a copy of the puzzle sheet each. Their task is to find the coordinates listed, and then join the points they have found to create two shapes. Full instructions are included on the puzzle sheet.

This may be a good activity to occupy any children who arrive early while they are waiting for the others to come.



Recap/Intro

Last time we heard about
Easter Sunday, and how on the
third day after Jesus' death he
came back to life again. Some
of his friends went and saw his
empty tomb and later they met
him and saw for themselves
that he really was alive. Today
we're going to be thinking
about what happened to Jesus
and his disciples after that.

Great Commission

You will need: Bible, pictures printed out or displayed on PowerPoint

Suggested images are images 3, 6, 12 and 13 from this link: http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/lumo-ascension/

The image numbers are included in the script below at the appropriate points.

For 40 days after his death Jesus spent time with his disciples, and many other people saw him too.

3. He taught his disciples about God's Kingdom. One time as he

was having a meal with them, he told them, "Don't leave Jerusalem until the Father gives you the gift he promised - the Holy Spirit."

Jesus was telling the disciples that God was going to send his Spirit, the Holy Spirit, to them.

He said, "When the Holy Spirit comes, he will give you power, and you will be my witnesses. You will tell people about me everywhere - right here in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth."

6. He gave his disciples some more instructions of what they were to do.

Look up Matthew 28:18-20 and read it in the Bible. Then discuss together:

What does Jesus tell his disciples to do?

- Go and make disciples of all nations (tell people everywhere about how they can follow Jesus)
- Baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (see if the children remember what baptism means - a sign of people putting their old, sinful life behind them and choosing to follow Jesus)
- Teach others to obey his commands

If you were one of Jesus' disciples how would you feel about being given that task? Does it sound easy or hard?

Maybe it sounds like a hard task, but Jesus reassures his disciples by giving them a promise. What is the promise he gives?

That he will always be with them.

12. After Jesus had spent 40 days with his disciples, teaching them these things, he

went out to a hill with them one day and as the disciples were watching, Jesus rose up into the sky. His disciples watched until a cloud covered him and he was out of their sight.

13. They continued to stand there, staring up into the sky, until two angels appeared. They said, "Why are you standing, staring up into heaven? Jesus has been taken into heaven but one day he will return in the same way you saw him go."

The disciples returned to Jerusalem to wait for the Holy Spirit to come.



Reflection

It sounds like Jesus broke his promise to the disciples that he would always be with them, but really it was just that he was going to be with them in a different way. Up until then he had been with them as a person, but now he was sending the Holy Spirit to be with them.

Christians sometimes talk about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit – you might have noticed that phrase being mentioned when we read Matthew 28:19 earlier.

It's a confusing idea. Christians believe that there is one God but that he is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each of them is slightly different, but all of them are God.

In the Old Testament when we heard about God speaking and God doing things, we were talking about God the Father.

The Son is Jesus because he is sometimes referred to as the Son of God. Christians believe that he is God but he came to earth to live as a man.

We can't see the Holy Spirit, but Christians believe that when we put our faith in God the Holy Spirit comes to live inside us to help us know God and follow him.

We'll talk more next time about the Holy Spirit as we'll find out what happened to the disciples when the Holy Spirit came.

Do you remember the promise that the angels made to the disciples?

That Jesus would come back from heaven one day in the same way they saw him go.

We are still waiting for that to happen, but Christians believe that one day Jesus will return as he promised. We have no idea when that will happen. The Bible doesn't tell us, but it does say that it will happen suddenly at a moment when people aren't expecting it, and that somehow when it happens everyone on earth will know about it.

Prayer Activity

You will need: Prayer spirals for each child (from additional document: Prayer Spiral), pens, scissors, string/ wool, Sellotape (optional)

Even though we can't see Jesus today, Christians believe that he still listens to our prayers and helps us. Give the children each a copy of the prayer spiral (from additional document: Prayer Spiral). Get them to write a prayer inside the spiral. It can be anything they want, e.g. a prayer of thanks, a question, asking God for help...

Then get them to cut the spiral out and attach a piece of string to the centre so that the spiral hangs down.

Encourage them to take it home and to hang it up. If they

hang it over a bulb or a heater the spiral will spin because of the hot air. They can't see the hot air, but it is still there, and this can serve as a reminder that although we cannot see Jesus he is there and he hears our prayers.