

ASCENSION OF THE LORD

YEAR C

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Lord,
just as the disciples were happy
that Jesus returned to you,
make us happy
to know about him
and keep us always
praising you.
We ask this
through Christ our Lord.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

The mission of the Church is to evangelize.

Our Gospel tells us that before Jesus left his disciples physically, he called them to be his witnesses. And to what are they to witness? All that they have seen and heard. They are to tell everyone to turn from their sins and receive God's forgiveness. But Jesus does not leave them alone in this mission. He promises them the Holy Spirit and then gives them his blessing.

In the passage from Acts, the disciples are baptized in the Holy Spirit and receive power to preach in the name of Jesus.

Like love, evangelization is not an option for the Church. We are commanded in today's readings: "Go . . . you are to be my witnesses . . ."

FIRST READING: Acts 1:3-5, 8-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

After Jesus died and rose,
he appeared to his apostles many times
to show them that he was really alive.
They saw him,
and he talked to them about the reign of God.
He told them not to leave Jerusalem
but to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit.
Jesus said,

"I have told you about the promise.
John baptized with water, but in a few days,
you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.
The Holy Spirit will give you power
to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea,
Samaria, and all over the world."

After he said this, Jesus was taken up to heaven.
Even though they couldn't see him anymore,
the disciples stayed there staring into the sky.
Two men, dressed in white robes,
appeared to them and said,

"Jesus has been taken up to heaven,
but he will come back to you!"

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE/GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Psalm 47

Round

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③

1. Praise God with trum-pets, praise God with songs. Pro -
2. Sing praise to Je - sus our Lord and God. Pro -
*3. Sing al - le - lu - ia, sing al - le - lu - ia! Sing

④

1. claim Good News to all of the earth!
2. claim Good News to all of the earth!
3. al - le - lu - ia, sing al - le - lu - ia!

GOSPEL: *Luke 24:44-53*

A reading from the Gospel of Luke.

Jesus said to his disciples,

"While I was with you, I told you
about all that was going to happen to me."

Then he helped them understand
all that was written about him
in the books of Moses,
the prophets and the Psalms.
Jesus said,

"It was written in those books
that Christ would have to suffer and die,
but that he would rise from the dead
on the third day.

It was also written that everyone in Jerusalem
and in every part of the world
should be told to turn away from their sins,
and God will forgive them.

And you are witnesses of this
because you have seen all of this happen.
Now you must stay in Jerusalem
until I send you the power from heaven
that God has promised."

Then Jesus led the disciples to Bethany.
When they were there,
Jesus raised his hands and blessed them.
As he blessed them, he was taken up to heaven.
The disciples went back to Jerusalem
filled with joy
and went every day to the temple to praise God.
The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

After the Gospel, ask the children to retell what they heard. Ask them to listen to the Gospel again, this time listening for the words they think are very important. Hopefully they will give a variety of words such as:

- Jesus rose,
- appeared,
- gift of the Holy Spirit,
- promise,
- baptized,
- water,
- power,
- witnesses.

You may wish to write on newsprint the words the children say.

Help the children reconstruct Jesus' directions that everyone should be told to turn away from sin and accept God's forgiveness.

Ask the children how the disciples were able to do this. Remind them of the first reading that tells us that the disciples were baptized in the Holy Spirit. With that power they were able to do many things, especially to be witnesses for Jesus. Be sure the children understand the meaning of "witness."

We also received the Holy Spirit when we were baptized:

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

And so, we too have the power of the Holy Spirit to be witnesses for Jesus. How can we do this?

Jesus said he wants everyone to hear the Good News that he is alive and wants everyone to live with him forever. Jesus said, "Go . . . tell everyone the Good News." How can we help do that?

(As always, it is important to keep the children focused on ideas truly possible for them at their age.)