

The Ascension

Luke 24:44-53

MEMORY VERSE

LUKE 24:51

Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

An envelope containing the memory verse for today's lesson.

A clear jar or glass filled with Hershey's kisses.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

With a Little Help

Write the memory verse for today's lesson and place it in a sealed envelope. Tape the envelope to the ceiling before class. When the children come back into the class after worship, pick a volunteer to do a difficult task. Tell the volunteer that you need what's in the envelope and to please get it down for you. Do not allow him to stand on anything or take help from anyone in the class. When he sees that they can't get the envelope, lift him up to reach the envelope. Have him read its contents to the class (or you read it if the child is too young to read).

Explain to your class that Jesus said He must bodily leave to send the Helper, or Holy Spirit. Just like the volunteer couldn't complete the task assigned without help, we can't do or be what God wants us to do or be without His help. **God promises His Holy Spirit to help His children.**

LESSON TIME!

After Jesus' resurrection, He appeared to His disciples on numerous occasions. The empty tomb, His documented visitations, and the breaking of the bread He shared with the men on the road to Emmaus and His disciples on the shore of the sea of Galilee were proof positive of His bodily resurrection. He had encouraged His disciples and restored Peter during this time, but now He was preparing His disciples to live without His bodily presence, but He was not going to leave us completely. **God promises His Holy Spirit to help His children.**

LUKE 24:44-45

Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

Jesus explained to the disciples all of the prophecies concerning the coming of Messiah and all of the things the Christ would accomplish according to the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. The volume of the Old Testament points to the coming Savior. Jesus explained to His followers that He fulfilled the promises of Scripture, over 300 prophecies concerning His first coming. The disciples could be confident that Jesus was the Christ because of the prophecies He fulfilled and His resurrection.

How do we know today that the Bible is true and that Jesus is who He says He is? A sure way is to look at all of the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. If Jesus was not the Messiah then there is no one else who can fulfill the prophecies declared in the Old Testament.

Jesus fulfilled God's word perfectly. We can confidently believe in Him because He has always kept His word.

How Many?

Take a clear, small jar or glass and fill it with Hershey's kisses. Have everyone in the class try to guess how many kisses are in the jar. Make sure the class knows that you are the only one who knows exactly how many kisses there are in the container. After everyone has tried to guess, pick a volunteer to be your "prophet." Whisper in his ear how many kisses are in the container and have him announce the number to the class. Then, have another volunteer empty the contents of the container and count out how many kisses there are.

Explain to the class that this is much like prophecy. Many people can guess what will happen or what is true, but God alone really knows. He tells people who are called "prophets" who then tell the people around them what God has said. When the prophecy has been fulfilled, everyone knows that this was a true prophet and that he really heard from God.

The whole Bible prophesies and documents the coming of the Savior, the Promised One, the Messiah. We can see that the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms are true because they have been fulfilled in Jesus.

Jesus opened the understanding of Scripture for the disciples. He desires that we understand His word as well. If we ask for understanding, He will open His word to us, because **God promises His Holy Spirit to help His children**. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would lead us into all truth. When we really seek to understand God's word, the Holy Spirit will help us.

LUKE 24:46

Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day..."

The nation of Israel was looking for a kingly Messiah, a "knight in shining armor" to come and rescue the Jewish people from the oppression of Roman rule. They did not understand the prophecies of Scripture.

Jesus explained to the disciples that He had to suffer, die, and rise again just as Scripture prophesied. This was declared in the Old Testament, but the nation of Israel missed it. Jesus had to die and rise again to be the sacrifice for our sins. He was the only one worthy to die and take our sins upon Himself.

LUKE 24:47-48

"...and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

And you are witnesses of these things."

There is no true repentance without Jesus; He was the perfect sacrifice. The animal sacrifices of the Old Testament only covered the sins of the people; Jesus, the perfect, spotless lamb, washes them completely away.

The Jews believed that the Messiah would come and redeem Israel only. Again they misunderstood Scripture. Jesus came, according to prophecy, to save the whole world, not just the nation of Israel. Jesus told the disciples to preach repentance and removal of sins in His name to the whole world. Jerusalem was to be only the beginning.

Jesus went on to encourage the disciples to tell what they had witnessed. Each disciple had a story to tell the world; Jesus told

them that they had credibility because they were witnesses of the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Christ. **God promises His Holy Spirit to help His children.**

LUKE 24:49

"Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Jesus let the disciples know that the "promise" of His Father was coming. He told them to wait to be empowered from on high; the promise of the Holy Spirit. **God promises His Holy Spirit to help His children.**

What Jesus is talking about here in this verse is the promise of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come "upon" His disciples to give them power. He would help us to live our lives for Jesus, help us to witness for Jesus and help us to understand the Bible. Each one of us can also receive the "promise" of the Holy Spirit by asking Jesus to baptize us with the Holy Spirit. Then we also will be empowered to be witnesses for Jesus.

LUKE 24:50-51

And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.

Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

The disciples had been through quite an ordeal. They had seen their teacher and master falsely accused, beaten and murdered. They had feared for their very lives during and after the crucifixion. Then, in an amazing turn of events, they were miraculously restored to their beloved Lord.

They were probably ready to take on the world then, but Jesus told them to wait for empowerment from on high. He knew that the emotion of the moment might go away. They would need a lot more than emotion to get them through the next several years. To do what the disciples were being called to do would require supernatural power. It would take the power of the Holy Spirit. **God promises His Holy Spirit to help His children.**

It's important to serve the Lord through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. We can try to do things for God by the motivation of emotions, but the Bible says our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). We can only really accomplish what God wants us to by the power of His Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:6). **God promises His Holy Spirit to help His children.**

Red Light/Green Light

Set as many Hershey's Kisses at the front of the classroom as the number of children in your class. Tell them to line up at the opposite end of the room for a game of "Red Light/Green Light." When you say "Green Light" the children must move forward toward the candy. When you say "Red Light" they must stop and freeze. If they move they are out and must start over. The first child to get a Hershey's Kiss is the winner, and must sit out and watch the game start over until all the children have received a treat.

Explain that sometimes it's hard to wait for the treats that the Lord has for us. When He tells us to stop, we need to stop; when He says go, we need to go. If we move without His direction, we often get delayed at reaching the goal.

After teaching and commissioning the disciples one last time, Jesus took them out into the open country and blessed them one last time. Right before their eyes, in the middle of this blessing, Jesus began to ascend to heaven. What a wonderful last memory that

must have been for the disciples; the last words they heard Jesus speak were words of blessing. Our lives touch others for Christ when our words are words of blessing.

LUKE 24:52-53

And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,

and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.

Although Jesus told the disciples to wait for the promised Holy Spirit in Jerusalem, the disciples didn't sit idly by waiting for the fulfillment of the that promise. They occupied their time with worship. The Bible says that they returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Jesus had left them and they were told to do nothing until further instructions, but they were filled with joy. Why? Because of the hope of Jesus' promise. They were willing to wait on the Lord for the fulfillment of His promises. In the mean time, they were "continually in the temple praising and blessing God."

God has made many promises to us; we're His children. Much of our life in Christ is spent waiting for the fulfillment of His promises. Do we worry or fret while we wait for those promises to be fulfilled, or do we occupy ourselves with worship and praise while we wait? The disciples were busy praising God when the fulfillment of Jesus' promise came to pass. We honor the Lord and experience the abundant life Jesus came to give when we occupy our lives with praise. **God promises His Holy Spirit to help His children.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for the ministry of the Holy Spirit. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them an opportunity to do so.