

# Jesus Returns to Heaven

Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:1-11



### Worship Theme:



God helps us tell others about Jesus.

### Weaving Faith Into Life:




Children will praise God for helping them tell others about Jesus.

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>1</b> Let's Praise God! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	<b>Sing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "It Is by Grace" (Ephesians 2:8-9)</li> <li>• "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"</li> <li>• "This Little Light of Mine"</li> <li>• "Living Inside Out"</li> <li>• "Go and Make Disciples" (Matthew 28:19)</li> <li>• "Brotherly Love" (Romans 12:10)</li> </ul>	<b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> <b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Video equipment, index cards, markers, construction paper, glue sticks, scissors

### Preschool

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>2</b> Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	<b>Jesus Went Up, Up, Up</b> Help tell the Bible story with their fingers and a rhyme.	
	<b>God Wants Everyone</b> Play a game of Chain Tag.	
	<b>* Jesus-Loves-You Flowers</b> Make flowers to give to others.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> 1 piece of colored tissue paper and 1 chenille wire per child

**Elementary**

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>2</b> Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	<b>* "Olivia &amp; Elyse's Story"</b> Explore the Bible passages, present a news segment, and watch a video clip.	<b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> <b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Bibles, paper, pencils, video equipment
	<b>* Submarine Hook</b> Squeeze a tricky bottle to see an example of God's help.	<b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> Submarine Hooks <b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Clear 2-liter plastic bottle
	<b>Arms Out</b> Participate in an object lesson about God's help.	

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>3</b> Let's Pray! <i>(up to 10 minutes)</i>	<b>The Offering</b> Offer their gifts to God.	<b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> <b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Offering bowls, video equipment
	<b>Ask God</b> Ask God to help them tell someone about Jesus.	
	<b>Praise God</b> Praise God in several fun ways.	

\* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together. Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Let's Learn the Point! Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

# Jesus Returns to Heaven

Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:1-11

As we begin looking at this passage, it's interesting to note that even after spending three years with Jesus and seeing him alive after witnessing his death on the cross, some of his disciples had doubts. But we should be careful not to be too hard on them. How skeptical would you be if you heard of someone being dead for three days and then coming back to life? Wouldn't you be suspicious that some kind of trick was being played?

The disciples' doubts didn't stop Jesus from trusting them. Matthew 28:18-20 says that Jesus placed the future of all he had done on earth into their hands. And he commissioned them with a task that has yet to be completely fulfilled: to "make disciples of all nations." As Christians we have inherited that commission to reach our world for Christ today. But Jesus didn't just give a task; he promised support. He told them, and us, that he would be with his people always, even to the end of the world as we know it!

We all know that Jesus appeared to his disciples multiple times after his resurrection. But we don't often pay attention to the number of times he appeared, or the number of people he appeared to, over the 40 days he remained on earth, which Luke emphasizes in Acts 1:3-4. The "convincing proofs" left no doubt in his followers' minds that Jesus had truly risen from the dead. And following the commission he had given them, they were ready to spread the word to their world!

Before Jesus physically departed for heaven, he gave his followers a plan to use in reaching the world. First they were to wait. The power would come when the Holy Spirit came on them. Then they were to move out from Jerusalem step by step, eventually reaching the ends of the earth. That plan is a good one for us to follow as well. If we have the Holy Spirit in our lives, the Holy Spirit will empower us to reach others for Christ, whether they are across the street or across the world.

As Jesus was ascending to heaven, angels came to give the disciples one last prod and one last promise. It did no good for the followers to stand looking into the sky. They needed to get going according to the plan Jesus had laid out for them. The promise the angels gave was that Jesus would return—in a powerful and unanticipated way—as he had departed from them.

In our lives, it's easy to be comfortable in our faith in Jesus and not worry too much about others. But we, too, must remember that Jesus is coming back to take his followers to live with him in heaven. Until he comes, he has given his followers the charge to share his love with everyone. That's not just something we should do. It's what our lives should be about!

## Devotion for Leaders

Jesus invites us into a *dynamic* relationship. He helps us grow—and he offers us full participation in his work and mission on earth. What a privilege—to be entrusted with taking Christ's message to others!

**Weaving Faith Into Your Life:** Reread the Great Commission from Matthew 28:16-20. It says the disciples had doubts. What doubts do you struggle with? Jesus issued a strong invitation and challenge. Imagine Jesus personally inviting you to carry out his plans! How do his words make you feel? Take a moment to discuss your doubts with God, and ask him to build your confidence and strengthen your desire to participate in his awesome work.

## Why We Worship for Leaders

Today we worship God because he helps us tell other people about Jesus. God wants all people to follow him because he is the one true God. God has made one way of salvation, and that way is through Jesus. In our Bible story today, we see that Jesus told his disciples to make disciples of all nations. Jesus is for people of every race, every tongue, and every nation.

Let's help children realize that, although we're commanded to tell others about Jesus, we are not left to do it alone. Jesus himself says he is with us always. Thank you for helping children love God so much that they want to tell others about Jesus. And thank you for helping them learn to rely on God's help to do so.

## Easy Prep for Leaders

### Let's Praise God!

- Make sure your video equipment is ready.
- Write the names of several different countries on index cards. Make enough cards for each child to have one, and make at least two cards for each country you choose to use.

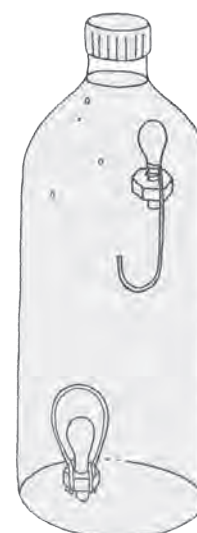
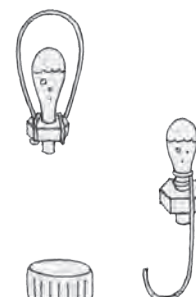
**"Olivia & Elyse's Story"**—Watch "Olivia & Elyse's Story" at least once before the worship session.

**Submarine Hook**—Prepare the Submarine Hooks from the KidsOwn Worship Kit, using the margin illustration as a guide. Clip the ends off both eyedroppers, leaving about a half-inch tail. Thread a nut onto the bottom of each eyedropper. (If the nut doesn't fit, you can simply loop the wire around it so it acts as an anchor when you add the wire.) Cut the wire in half, and then cut one of the halves in half again. Wrap the long piece of wire tightly around one eyedropper and form a loop above the eyedropper bulb. Wrap one of the short pieces of wire tightly around the other eyedropper and form a hook below the eyedropper bulb. Fill a 2-liter bottle with water. Fill the wire-loop eyedropper with water, leaving a small air bubble at the top, and gently insert it upside down into the 2-liter bottle. It should sink to the bottom.

Fill the hook eyedropper about one-third to one-half full of water. Gently insert it upside down into the 2-liter bottle. It should float near the top of the bottle. Screw on the bottle's lid, and squeeze the bottle. The hook eyedropper should sink like a submarine toward the wire-loop dropper. The object is to "hook" the wire loop with the wire hook. It's a good idea to practice this several times before the session. If you have trouble, try these troubleshooting options:

- change the amount of air in the floats
- change the length of the loop
- thread the wire between the nut and the float for more sturdiness

**Preschool Activities**—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.



# 1 Let's Praise God!

Play KidsOwn Worship music videos as children arrive. Greet children by name, and say to each one, "Go and make disciples in every nation!" Ask each child to take a "nation" card. Ask children to hold on to their cards until the end of the session.

When everyone has arrived, begin the worship session.

**Say** **Hello, everyone. I'm glad you're here to worship God today. Today we worship because God helps us tell others about Jesus. God wants us to tell the whole world about his Son, Jesus. And God always helps us do the things he asks us to do.**

**Ask** • **Why do we want to tell others about Jesus?** (So they can know about God; so they can know Jesus died so their sins can be forgiven.)

**Say** **Jesus has saved us, and we want the rest of the world to have salvation, too. Jesus saved us by grace through faith. Let's worship God with a Bible verse song from Ephesians 2:8-9.**

▶ Sing "It Is by Grace" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

**Say** **Jesus has saved us by grace through faith. That's great news! Jesus was born, died for our sins, and came back to life. We can thank Jesus by following him.**

▶ Sing "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus."

**Say** **Since Jesus saved us, we want to tell others about Jesus, too. God will always help us let our lights shine so others can see Jesus.**


▶ Sing "This Little Light of Mine."

**Ask** • **What is one way God will help us tell everybody about Jesus?** (God helps us not be afraid to talk to people; God helps us know what to say.)


**Say** **One way God helps us tell others is by changing our lives. As we see God doing things for people and changing their lives, we feel encouraged to tell everybody. Turn to your neighbor, and tell him or her one way that Jesus has changed your life. For example, I would say that Jesus has given me joy.**

Pause as children share with each other.

**Say** **Sometimes sharing Jesus with others is as easy as just living for Jesus each day! Because Jesus has changed your life, others will see how you are living your life differently. And that's radical! Let's sing about living our lives radically for Jesus.**

 Sing "Living Inside Out."

Ask the children to look at the "nation" cards they received when they arrived and find at least one other person in the room with the same country.


**Say**  **When you find your partner, make a "Jesus flag" for your nation. Everyone in every nation needs to hear about Jesus. Draw things on your Jesus flag to symbolize knowing Jesus. For example, you might draw a cross.**


After the children find their partners, provide construction paper, glue sticks, and scissors for each set of partners. Give the children a few minutes to make their flags. Then regain their attention, and put away the craft supplies.


**Say**  **As we sing "Go and Make Disciples" hold up your Jesus flags. At the end of the song, shout the names of the nations on your cards.**

Have your helpers make sure younger children know the names of the countries on their cards.

 Sing "Go and Make Disciples" (Matthew 28:19).

**Say**  **God wants everyone in the world to know Jesus. He wants everyone to be saved. God saved us, not because of the good things we do, but because of his mercy. Jesus saved us because he loves us. And Jesus wants us to share his love with everyone. Let's sing about loving others because Jesus loves us.**

 Sing "Brotherly Love" (Romans 12:10).

**Pray**  **Thank you, God, for saving us. Thank you, God, for helping us tell people about Jesus. We worship you for caring about people enough to help us share Jesus with them. In Jesus' name, amen.**

## **Let's Learn the Point!**

### **Preschool Activities, pages 121-122**

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Tear out the Preschool Activities page, and give it to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let's Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (\*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.

## Elementary Activities

### \* "Olivia & Elyse's Story"

Help children form groups of three. Make sure nonreaders are in groups with readers. Give each group a Bible, paper, and a pencil. Instruct the groups to look up Matthew 28:16-20. Have the children read the passage together and write a job description for the disciples. Ask each group to share its job description with the rest of the groups.

When groups have finished sharing, direct them to look up Acts 1:1-11. Have the groups read the passage and pretend that they're TV news reporters. Tell each group to write a news update for the Bible story as if it were going to be presented on the evening news. Make sure the children answer the six questions of journalism (who, what, when, where, how, and why) as they write their news updates. Have each small group present its news update to another small group.

- Ask**
- **Why is it important for the world to know about Jesus?** (Jesus died for everyone's sins; Jesus is the only way to heaven.)
  - **How do you think the disciples felt about the job they'd been given?** (They must have thought it would be a lot of work; maybe they wondered how to start.)

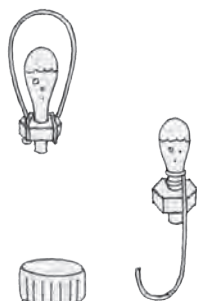
**▶** Show the "Olivia & Elyse's Story" video. The video shows sisters who helped their uncle learn about Jesus.

- Ask**
- **What did these children know about telling others about Jesus?** (That telling others would help them; that they could just do it; that they could keep trying.)
  - **Who did this video inspire you to tell about Jesus?** (Answers will vary.)
  - **What can you do to tell others about Jesus?** (Think of people who need Jesus; ask God to help me; call someone; draw pictures.)

**Say** **The instructions Jesus gave his disciples are for us, too. Jesus wants us to tell the world about him. And Jesus promises to help us by being with us forever. Let's learn more about Jesus' help.**

### \* Submarine Hook

**Say** **Jesus asked us to go tell the world about him. But we don't have to do it alone. God will help us all the way. Let me show you what I mean.** Hold up the bottle containing the Submarine Hook. **In this bottle, there's a hook that's floating near the top and a loop that has sunk to the bottom. Let's pretend that the hook on top is a Christian. The loop on the bottom is not a Christian. The Christian wants his friend to learn to love Jesus, too. He needs to reach down, hook his friend, and help him learn to believe in Jesus.**



(continued on page 123)

# Jesus Returns to Heaven

Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:1-11

## Worship Theme:



God helps us tell others about Jesus.

## Easy Prep for Leaders

**Jesus-Loves-You Flowers**—Prepare a sample Jesus-Loves-You flower using the directions in the activity.

## Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo help lead the rhyme in “Jesus Went Up, Up, Up.”
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today’s worship session.



## Jesus Went Up, Up, Up

Have the preschoolers sit in a circle.

**Say** Welcome, preschoolers! You’re going to use your fingers to help me tell the Bible story today. After Jesus died on the cross, God brought him back to life. That means Jesus was alive again! He talked with his friends the disciples. Then it was time for him to go up into heaven—up, up, up!

But before Jesus went up, up, up, he told us to go, go, go. Hold up your pointer finger. Your pointer finger will tell the story. Demonstrate the motions for the rhyme.

Before Jesus went up, up, up,  
(Point upward three times.)

He told us to go, go, go!

(Point toward the door three times.)

“Go tell them about me,

Because I’m going up, up, up,

(Point up three times.)

Up to heaven, you see!”

Everyone must know, know, know

(Point to your head three times.)

That Jesus loves us so, so, so!

(Nod your head three times.)

**Say** Great job! Jesus told us to go into all the world and tell people about him. Jesus will help us tell everyone about him!



## Preschool Activities

### God Wants Everyone

**Say** We're going to play a game of Tag. I'm going to help you tell everyone about Jesus. I'll tag someone, then we'll go together to tag someone. We'll say, "Jesus loves you!" every time we tag someone. Each person we tag will join us to tag someone else.

Play the game.

**God helps us tell others about Jesus, just as I helped you tag the next person.**

**Ask** • How does God help us tell others about Jesus?

**Say** One way God helps us is by helping us know what to say to each person. You may feel like God wants you to tell someone that Jesus loves him or her. If you do, go ahead and tell that person. God will help you say it. Another way God helps us is by helping people believe what we tell them about Jesus. God wants everyone to believe in Jesus.

### \* Jesus-Loves-You Flowers

You'll need a piece of colored tissue paper and a chenille wire for each child. (Colored facial tissues will work, too.) Demonstrate how to fold the tissue to resemble a fan. Then pinch the tissue in the middle, and wrap a chenille wire around it as shown here. Help the children make their flowers.

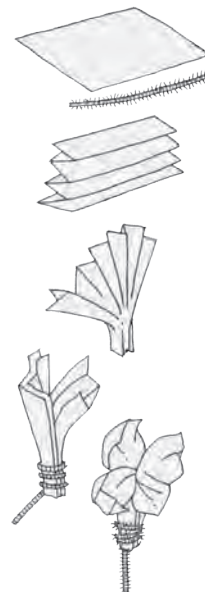
**Say** This special flower can help you tell someone about Jesus. Everyone is special to God, and God loves everyone. You can give your flower to someone, and, when you give your flower, say, "Jesus loves you!"

**Let's join hands in a circle and take turns telling God that we love him. I'll start. I love you, God.**

Help children take turns saying "I love you, God."

**Say** We love God and people so much that we want to tell everyone about Jesus. Let's thank God for helping us tell everyone about Jesus. I'll start. Thank you, God, for helping us tell people about Jesus.

Help children take turns thanking God.



(continued from page 120)

**Say** ➤ **The object of this game is to get the top hook, the Christian, to link up with the loop, the non-Christian. See if you can figure out how to do it without turning the bottle over.**

Let several children examine the Submarine Hook bottle and try to connect the hook and the loop.

**Say** ➤ **I think the hook needs a little outside help. Let's try squeezing the bottle and watch what happens.**

Demonstrate by squeezing the bottle so that the hook sinks to the bottom of the bottle. Let several children experiment with the bottle, squeezing it until they can catch the loop. When the hook and loop are joined together,

**Say** ➤ **Congratulations! You did it!**

**Ask** ➤ • **Do you think you ever could have connected these two without squeezing the bottle? Why or why not?** (No, because I couldn't reach inside; maybe, if I kept trying.)

• **How was squeezing this bottle like the help God gives us when we're trying to tell others about Jesus?** (It made what was impossible possible; it brought the pieces together like God connects us with people who need Jesus.)

• **How does God help us tell others about Jesus?** (God gives us courage; God helps us know what to say.)

**Say** ➤ **God helps us in many ways. Just like the hook needed a little help from the outside, we need help from God. God helps us by giving us the words to say. God also helps us by sending us other people to help us. Sometimes God helps us know what to pray for people, and those prayers will help them understand more about Jesus and get to know him better.**

## Arms Out

Help kids form groups of five or six. Have each group stand in a circle.

**Say** ➤ **Cross your arms, right over left, and hold the hands of the people on either side of you in your group.**

**Stay like this until I ask you to move. Now we are all believers in Jesus. We are all facing one another. We can tell one another about Jesus all day long, but all of us already believe in Jesus. The disciples who watched Jesus go up to heaven already knew about Jesus. They could have stood around and told each other how amazing he was, but they didn't. They did what Jesus asked them to do.**

**With God's help and with each other's help, they went out and told others about Jesus. Now continue to hold hands with your Christian friends, but raise your arms over your head. As you do, say, "Help, God!" to represent asking God to help you tell others about him.**

**Say** ▶ Now continue to hold hands over your heads and turn toward the right until you are all facing out. (Pause.)

You're all still helping each other, but now you can tell people on the outside about Jesus. God will always help you do it. You'll never be alone. Now you can drop hands and sit right where you are, facing me. (Pause.)

Raise your hand if you can tell us about a time God helped you tell someone about Jesus. How did Jesus help you do it? Have volunteers tell their stories.


- Ask** ▶
- How can God help you tell people about Jesus? (God helps me know what to say; God helps me know who to talk to.)
  - How can other Christians help you tell people about Jesus? (They can tell me how they did it; they can pray for me.)
  - What should you do as you get ready to tell someone about Jesus? (Pray; think about how much Jesus loves the person.)

**Say** ▶ We should always pray that God will help us. He is always ready to help us. God doesn't ask us to do anything that he won't help us do. Sometimes God uses other people to help us tell others about Jesus. Our Christian friends can encourage us, go with us to tell people, or add their stories to ours. We praise God today for helping us do what he asks of us.

**Pray** ▶ God, we love you so much. We love the people you created in every nation. We thank you for helping us tell people about Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen.

## 3 Let's Pray!

### *The Offering*

 Play KidsOwn Worship music videos while you take the offering. Have the children place their "nation" cards in the offering bowl and pray that God will help Christians tell the people in that country about Jesus.

### *Ask God*

Have children find a quiet place in the room to pray individually. Have them think of someone with whom they could share Jesus. Encourage them to ask God to help them share Jesus with those people.

### *Praise God*

Help the children form groups of four or five.

**Say** ▶ Let's praise God together in our small groups. In your group, count down from three. Say, "Three, two, one, praise!" Then praise God with shouts. Ready? Go!

Next have the groups count down and praise God with jumping.

Then have the groups count down and praise God with applause.

**Say** **We have a good God who loves our praise. Today we've been praising God for helping us tell others about him. On your way out of the room today, tell at least one other person that Jesus loves him or her.**