

Sunday, May 4, 2008

Ascension Sunday

Preparation:

Read the Scripture passage for the day over –Acts 1: 6-14 - it can be found online at <http://divinity.library.vanderbilt.edu/lectionary/AEaster/aEaster7.htm#acts> Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump out at you. You may want to read from the beginning of the chapter to get the whole sense of what is going on here.

Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. If you can, print up the picture for the week from the website. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

<http://msssbible.com/newtestament/ascension.htm>

<http://www.textweek.com/festivals/ascension.htm>

<http://children.calvarychapel.com/site/pdf/New/Curr244.pdf>

<http://talks2children.itsforministry.org/t2c/seasonal.asp>

Gathering:

Materials needed:

Small table or end of one table

White candle

Bible & Bookmark

White cloth (optional)

Yellow streamers (one per person) with Alleluia printed on them

One good sized stone per child

Bubble container (from previous week)

Piece of cracker (from previous week)

Stone (from previous week)

Tote bag (from previous week)

Gather around the small table or at the end of one table. If you have the white cloth put it down and place the candle on it. Put the Bible and the bubble container, the cracker, the stone, and the tote bag near the candle (you may want to let the children help with this). Give everyone an “Alleluia streamer” and show them the word printed on it.

Light the candle.

Explain that every time they say “Alleluia” in the prayer they are to wave their streamer around. Pray the following prayer together:

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thank you God for Jesus. Alleluia!

Thank you God for new life. Alleluia!

Thank you God for all that you have done. Alleluia!

Amen.

Blow out the candle. Have the children put their streamers back on the table. Ask the children what they have had to do when preparing for a special event. (*Some possible ideas: cleaning, sending out invitations, getting new clothes, and hopefully someone will say waiting.*) Explain that in today’s story the children will hear about a time when the friends of Jesus had to prepare for a special event.

Story Time:

Materials needed:

A comfortable place to tell the story – on the floor with cushions or around a table

Little toy people – one for each child (such as Fisher Price or Play Mobile people), cotton balls

Choose one of the toy people to be Jesus and put into the centre of the group. Choose two of the toy people to be the angels for later in the story – put a white tissue over them to act as white robes. Give each child a toy person to hold while the story is told. Use the toy people to act out the story with the children. Use your imagination.

Jesus gathered with his friends just outside of Jerusalem. He told them that he had something very important to tell them. He told them there was something important for them to do.

Some of Jesus' friends had a question for him. They asked him, "Jesus is this the time when God's reign will come to Israel?"

Jesus answered them, "This question is not the right one for the time being. You are going to be given a great gift. The Holy Spirit is going to come and give you great power. All of you, my dear friends, will become my witnesses. You will tell the Good News to all in Jerusalem. You will tell the Good News to all in Judea. You will tell the Good News to all in Judea. You will tell the Good News to all in the whole world."

After Jesus had finished talking an astonishing thing occurred. Jesus was lifted up from the ground. As they watched a cloud covered him up from their sight. (*Use the cotton balls to cover up the toy person representing Jesus.*)

As Jesus friends were standing watching him disappear, two people in white robes stood before them. They said. "Friends why do stand and look up to heaven? Jesus is not here. He has gone to heaven. He will come back the same way that he has left you."

All of them returned to Jerusalem. Some of them were feeling sad. Some of them were feeling tired. Some of them were feeling curious. Some of them were feeling excited. Some were just not sure what was going to happen.

When they came back to the city they came to the room where they had been staying. Here who was together in the room: Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Mary, Joanna, Mary Magdalene, Matthew, Simon, James the son of Alpheus, Judas son of James, and other members of Jesus' family. (*While naming the various friends of Jesus, have the children hold up their toy people and place them in the centre of the group; if there are more names than toy people don't get too worried about it.*)

They all knew that they had something important to prepare for. They had to wait, like Jesus told them, for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Teach the children the refrain for the closing poem before finishing up the story time.

They gathered everyday to pray to God.

They gathered everyday to wait for the Holy Spirit.

They gathered everyday to share stories of Jesus.

They gathered everyday to wait for the Holy Spirit.

They gathered everyday to learn more about God.

They gathered everyday to wait for the Holy Spirit.

They gathered everyday to sing praises to God.

They gathered everyday to wait for the Holy Spirit.

Response:

Idea #1: Prayer Booklet Activity

This project will connect the children with the waiting and praying theme of the story.

Materials needed: construction paper, white paper, crayons, fine tip markers, seasonal stickers, stapler, and scissors

Instructions: Cut the construction paper in half horizontally – make two pieces for each child (for front and back covers). Cut enough white paper in half to make four sheets for each child. For the younger children make up the booklets (using the construction paper as the front and back covers and stapling it all together) ahead of time. Explain to the children that praying is an important part of preparation in the church. Help them to put their booklets together. Encourage them to decorate the front of the booklet with the markers and stickers that have been provided. With younger children you can suggest that they draw and colour pictures that describe their prayers for the coming week. Older children can write or draw as they are most comfortable doing. Invite the children to use the booklets to put their prayers in for use by themselves or with their families.

Idea #2: Ascension Picture

This idea is ideal for a group of younger children and will help to reinforce the story and the ideas that are presented in it.

Materials needed: Downloadable picture from internet, choose of the one of the following, print and make enough copies:

<http://www.hattoncoc.org/kids/ascension.jpg>

<http://www.calvarywilliamsport.com/5a13.htm>

Cotton balls, crayons, markers, glue sticks, glitter

Instructions: Give each child a copy of the picture. Invite them to colour them with the crayons or markers. When they are finished let them use the cotton balls and the glitter to make their pictures more three dimensional. While they are decorating them encourage the children to think about what Jesus' friends were feeling and preparing for to come into their lives.

Idea #3: Ascension Craft Time

This idea will allow the children to freely express their response to the story.

Materials needed: cotton balls, glue, construction paper, shiny wrapping paper, tissue paper, glitter, markers, crayons, scissors, pipe cleaners, tin foil and anything else that might come to your mind

Instructions: Lay out the materials for the children in an attractive manner. Invite them to look carefully at what has been laid out for them. Invite them to think about the story that they have just heard – remember that Jesus' friends are waiting, preparing, singing and waiting some more for the Holy Spirit. When they are ready encourage the children to use the materials to produce a piece of art work that reflects the story of the Ascension. If time, get everyone to share their creations with each other when they are complete.

Closing:

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Place the bubble container on the table. Put a piece of cracker on the table. Put a stone on the table. Put the tote bag on the table. Put a toy person and a cotton ball on the table. Relight the candle. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

Thank you God for our time together.

Thank you God for Jesus.

Thank you God for loving us.

Amen.