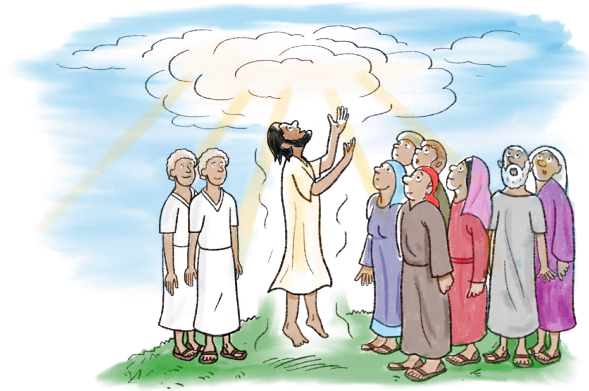


Bible reading Acts 1:6-14

Gone but not forgotten

THIS WEEK WE EXPLORE THE TURNING POINT OF THE ASCENSION.

On the mount called Olivet, Jesus assures the apostles that they will receive the power of the Holy Spirit and then disappears from their sight – he is ascended. The apostles return to Jerusalem, choose Matthias to replace Judas, and – together with the women – spend much time praying.



REFLECT

Take a moment to think about people in your life who you do not see regularly but remember fondly. Think about ways that you can show gratitude to God for these people. You could look through photographs and perhaps select a few to display in your home, or share a post about good memories on social media, or send them a message if you are still in touch.



Create a cloud in a jam jar by following the instructions on this link: <https://coolscienceexperimentshq.com/make-a-cloud-form-in-a-jar/>
You will need: ice, boiling water and hairspray. Children should be carefully supervised. Enjoy thinking about the science that underlies the experiment, as well as remembering that the Ascension was a turning point for the disciples.



Look at a map of your local area (or you could go for a walk). Use your fingers to 'walk' over the map, praying for people, places and organisations as you do so. You could use the following words: 'Risen Lord Jesus, watch over...[name/description]. Amen.'

Bible notes

Several New Testament writers picture the crucified and risen Jesus as 'ascended' or 'exalted' to God's heavenly dwelling place, but only Luke tells of an ascension day. The cloud and the men in white robes are signs of heavenly revelation, and in Zechariah 14:4 the Mount of Olives is where God's final victory is won.

Luke sees Jesus' ascension as a turning point: the climax of his Gospel (see Luke 24:50ff; cf. Luke 9:51), the end of Jesus' 40 days of resurrection appearances to his disciples (Acts 1:3) and the prelude to the coming of the Spirit (1:8). To fulfil their commission as his worldwide witnesses, Jesus' disciples will need a power that lifts them beyond their own resources. So, they wait prayerfully (v:14; cf. Luke 24:49). The community that refuses to forget Jesus is now enlarged to include members of Jesus' family alongside the 11 disciples and the Galilean women witnesses (v:14; Luke 23:55ff). The dynamic of prayer keeps Jesus' memory alive, as they come to understand the meaning of what has happened around him.



First impressions

- What is happening here?
- How do things change for the disciples once Jesus has ascended into heaven?
- Can you identify a turning point in your own life?

A gathering prayer

Lord Jesus, by your ascension you left our world,
but you did not abandon us.
You promised the Spirit –
who comes and makes a home within us,
who reminds us of you,
who guides and protects us
and surrounds us with God's love.
Help us to be aware of your presence today.
Amen.



Enjoy a game where you have to keep an object up in the air – perhaps a football or balloon. Afterwards, debate the best tactics – did you stand still or move around? Talk together about the ways in which the disciples kept their faith momentum going after the Ascension.