



## Living the Faith – Step 2 Returned to the Father

### Aim

To know of the events surrounding the Ascension of Jesus and what they mean for us today.

### Resources needed

#### Leaders

- *Come and See notes*
- *PPT laptop and projector or TV*
- *Prayer focus items*
- *Bible or Scripture Text*
- *Large sheets of paper and pens*

#### For Young People

- *Journals*

### Prayer Focus

Expressions of our belief:

**White Cloth** – *The Ascension*

**Image of the Risen Lord** - *Angel of the North, or alternative*

**Signpost** – *showing four side arrows, two each for repentance and forgiveness, one upwards pointing to the Father*

**Candle** – *White or yellow, Jesus the Light of the World*

### Liturgical Link

The Ascension is one of the important feasts of the Church. Previously celebrated on Thursday of the 6<sup>th</sup> week of Easter. No transferred to Sunday.

### Overview

- Obedience & Trust
- The Command and the Mission
- The Power of Forgiveness
- Gone but not Forgotten
- Growing in Holiness
- Prayerful Reflection

### Preparation by Catechists

- *Familiarity with content and resources*
- *Be ready to share stories of hope overcoming fear or finding peace*
- *Pray for the young people and leaders*

### Scripture Passages

- Lk 24:44-49 Jesus Command and Promise
- Lk 24:50-53 The Ascension

### Tenets of Faith (Faith Formation)

- Responsibilities of the baptised
- The call to repentance
- The promise of support
- The Ascension of Jesus
- The Power of the Holy Spirit

## Gathering:

- **Welcome and Overview** Thank the young people for coming back, give a brief reminder of key points from the last gathering.
  - Provide the overview and aim for today.
- **Introductory activity - Simon says:** few rounds of this, see how easily people join in. Then split into pairs, choose A / B. A has 1 minute to be in charge of B and request anything of B, who must obey. Then change over and repeat. Invite feedback regarding
  - how it felt to be giving orders and having to obey orders?
  - how safe did the one having to obey feel about what would be asked of them, were any requests unreasonable or embarrassing? If so on the first round, did the person 'pay back' when in charge?

**FF** - During his ministry Jesus spent time preparing the disciples to be observant, obedient and in all situations to be aware of the needs of others. Jesus had great power, but never abused it for good. - Power and authority are privileges to be used wisely, for the greater good, not self-interest or ego. - A valuable attitude to learn in life is to never ask another person to do something you are not willing to do yourself.

## Scripture and Reflection

- **The Command and the Mission** – Luke 24:44-49

**Introduction:** The disciples hadn't always fully understood or heeded Jesus words, now, having been re-energised by their meetings with the Risen Lord, their faith and trust would again be seriously tested.

**Luke 24:44-49** set the scene, then invite the young people to listen attentively as the passage is read, imagining themselves amongst the disciples, with these words being spoken to them.

*Invite the young people to spend a couple of minutes alone with these questions:*

### **Ponder**

- How do I respond to Jesus' request to make his life known to others?
- What are the practical ways in which I can *preach the Gospel*, and *call people to repent* so that their sins can be forgiven?
- Blaming another person for our failings or wrongful acts can seem a good way to avoid trouble: how easy do I find it to accept blame or offer forgiveness?
- Why is forgiveness so important?

*Working in small groups encourage the young people to share their thoughts and identify some real-life examples to support the views expressed.*

*Assign a note taker who will be able to share responses with the group*

**FF** - A sin is a wrongful act that is knowingly committed. Sin separates us from God  
- In baptism, free from sin, we are called to be one with Christ and his mission. The need to repent was central in Jesus mission, and that of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus.  
- It is a call to turn away from all that separates us from God, so our relationship with the Father can be restored, not just in this life, but for eternity.

- Recognising how difficult it can be to both forgive others and at times overcome our own guilt too, the Church gives us the Sacrament of reconciliation.
- This powerful Sacrament is one that is often neglected, but when used well brings great healing and hope into people's lives.

## Prayerful Response

- **Prayer focus:** *refer to items and their significance here and as appropriate later*

**The power of forgiveness** – Prayerfully let us consider

- Is there is a person who has caused hurt to me, whom I have not been able to forgive? – If so, now call that person to mind, ask God for the grace to forgive them.
- Is there a friend or family member whom I have hurt, by my attitudes, words or actions, and with whom I have not made up? – if so, bring that person to mind, asking God to help you forgive yourself for this injustice, and find the courage to say sorry and apologise to the person; even though they may have already forgiven you.
- If at school relationships amongst class groups are problematic, offer the situations to God and pray for the hearts of all involved to be softened, so that forgiveness may be found and harmony restored.

**FF** - The image of the *Angel of the North* represents the hand of God constantly watching over the people of Tyneside, in the North East of England. C&S L the F Step 2\_Angel of the north image

- In addition to the support around us, we experience the loving care of family members living in other places, and those who have died. These are the angels who watch over us.

While listening to the song, may we offer thanks to God for his love, and the many 'angels' in our lives who support and guide us.

**Song** – Abba I believe in Angels: <https://youtu.be/9myDvYndWjA> or other

We offer all these thoughts and prayers to God as we pray together the Our Father.

## Scripture and Reflection:

- **Gone but not forgotten**

Before leaving the disciples Jesus assured them: That the Holy Spirit, the power from on high, would be given to them, as promised by the Father.

- Ask the group members if they can recall other names used for the Holy Spirit?

**FF** - Holy Ghost is a term used in pre Vatican II times. The Holy Spirit is also referred to as the Paraclete or the Advocate. The word advocate means 'one who is summoned to help another'. Paraclete, has a similar meaning, a Greek term meaning 'called to the side of'.

- At each of the post resurrection appearances Jesus greets the disciples by saying: 'peace be with you.' – he invites them to live in the peace of the Holy Spirit.

- We receive the Holy Spirit in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. The Holy Spirit is a gift given to help us come closer to God and use more fully the gifts God has given us.

### **Luke 24:50-53 - The Ascension**

As they listen to the reading invite the young people to imagine they have been present, witnessing the encounter between Jesus and the disciples. Afterwards consider:

- How might you have felt?
- How did the disciples respond?

*Rather than being in turmoil, the disciples rejoiced, not seeming afraid at being left with a big task.*

- Can you think of a time when you really worried or afraid. Who or what helped you to cope?
- Describe how you felt afterwards.

- FF** - Each of us needs people to support us through difficult times. Such people are our advocates, the presence of the Holy Spirit for us. We can also call on the help of the Holy Spirit directly through prayer and an open heart.
- During the week look for opportunities to be an advocate by giving support to a friend or a family member in need. Might you also be able to bring the gift of peace to one whose heart is troubled or afraid?

## Going Deeper

- In the gospels, Jesus promises many times to send the Holy Spirit to be a guide and a help to his followers after his ascension. Let us explore the role of the Holy Spirit in our life and the Church today.
- **Growing in Holiness** - the disciples were asked to be obedient, to trust and to have patience.  
**Activity:** On the wall have three large sheets of paper each headed with the word OBEEDIENCE, TRUST, PATIENCE.
  - Invite the group to think about each in relation to their own life and the Church, and how using words, images or symbols they can be expressed. Offer some examples:
    - Obedience – grounded by parents; Trust – Safeguarding; Patience – sitting with the questions
  - (1 minute ponder time), then add to the sheets. (allow a few minutes only)
  - When finished gather the group around a table or floor space and lay out the sheets.  
**Activity:** Invite the young people to look at the words, images and symbols and to ask questions from others to help clarify the meaning.
  - Draw together any threads, then as a group identify any words or symbols that might seem to be the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- **Prayerful response:** Invite the young people to create for themselves a simple prayer using the three concepts, Obedience, Trust and Patience in ways that are relevant to their own lives:

**Example:** 1. Lord, help me be more attuned to what you want from me, to trust that you will always walk beside me and to have the patience to see my mission through.  
2. Lord Jesus, I don't like being told what to do, help me to be obedient to you and to others, when it really matters. Having been let down, I find it difficult to trust, help me to have the patience to look for the good in others and so learn to trust.

## Closing Prayer

- Gather in a circle / semi-circle around the prayer focus.  
Leader picks up the candle and says: Together we offer our prayers asking God to hear them and help us on the path to holiness. Gently, each person in turn offers their prayer holding the candle.

Together all then pray:

**Leader** Lord Jesus, here are your disciples, in need of your strength and support.

**All** With patience, help us to hold onto the questions for which there are no easy answers.  
enable us to trust in you, and the goodness of humanity.  
Help us to obey you wholeheartedly, so that we might help to restore the faith,  
hope and trust of others in you our Lord and Saviour.

**Leader** Lord Jesus, glorious and resurrected,  
you always will the best for us and dare us to smile with you, as we walk behind you.  
Give us your hopefulness, your determination and your peace.

**All** Amen

## Closing Remarks and Next Step

- Invite response to the Step 2 gathering
- Living the Faith Step 3 – Pentecost
- Encourage personal and prayer support of one another and attendance at Mass.