



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

### Aim

To grow in appreciation of the events surrounding the Ascension and their meaning for us today.

### Resources needed

#### Leaders

- *Come and See notes*
- *PPT laptop and projector or TV*
- *Prayer focus items*
- *Bible or Scripture Text*
- *Song*

#### 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 Father is the one to whom Jesus points the Way. The sacrament of reconciliation helps to bring healing, restoring our relationship with the Father.

### Overview

- Obedience & Trust
- The Command and the Mission
- The Power of Forgiveness
- Ascension - gone but not forgotten
- Growing in Holiness
- Prayerful Reflection

### Preparation by Catechists

- *Familiarity with content and resources*
- *Be ready to share stories regarding the importance and power of forgiveness*
- *Pray for the young people and leaders*

### Scripture Passages

- Luke 24:44-49 Jesus' Command and Promise
- Luke 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 & Overview:**

Thank the young people for coming back, give a brief reminder of key points from the last gathering. Give overview and aim for today.

- **Introductory activities**

***Tell Tale:***

- Divide group into three's:
  - A tells B a piece of news about a mutual friend which B is asked to keep a secret.
  - C has up to 1 minute to quiz B to try and find out the information.
- Groups swap roles and repeat so all have a go.

***I need support:***

- Invite each person to find a partner.
- Pairs stand back to back with their arms folded then gently squat into a supported sitting position, hold for the count of 10 then stand up again.
- Next couples stand one behind the other, a small distance apart. Person at the back positions ready to catch the other person as they lean back. Increase the distance and see how far they can go, then change over and repeat.

**\*\* *Ensure the space around couples is clear to avoid accidents.*** Invite feedback regarding:

- how easy was it to keep, or tempting to pass on the secret?
- how easy was it to trust the partner supporting you in the back to back activity and then again to catch you when falling backwards.
- invite young people to reflect on their ability to show trust and obey orders in other areas of life.

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- Trust and obedience are qualities that seem rather unfashionable in society today, yet much needed.
- Given the many instances of 'scammers' reported in the news, recent Royal Commissions and broken relationships, it is understandable that people find it difficult to trust individuals, systems or organisations.
- Obedience no longer comes from respect for a position in life, but only in response to a true respect for the person or office of which they have shown themselves worthy, it is earned.
- 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.
- Power and authority are to be used wisely, for the greater good, not self-interest or ego. Those who hold any 'office' may receive privileges, but they also have great responsibility for the wellbeing of others.
- A valuable attitude to cultivate in life is never to ask another person to do something you are not willing to do yourself. We must lead by example, as Jesus did.

## 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.

Then in pairs to

**Ponder:**

- how do I respond to the call to *be a witness* to my faith and the command to *preach the Gospel*, calling people to repentance so their sins can be forgiven. How can I possibly do this?
- today, what are the sins for which society in general and individuals may need to repent?
- in our growing 'blame culture' how can we encourage people to be more open to the notion of forgiveness. .
- why is forgiveness so important?

*Try to give some concrete examples to support the views expressed*

*Record responses in journals, chat in pairs, then be ready to share with the group*

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- Lack of forgiveness breeds a hardness of heart that can eat away at people, causing them to be unhappy, maybe even bitter and resentful. In such a frame of mind it is difficult for people to maintain good health or be in positive relationships.
- In baptism we have been called to be one with Christ and his mission. The call to repentance 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

- If there is a person who has caused us hurt; recently, or in the past, that we have been unable to forgive. – If so, now call that person to mind, ask God for the grace to forgive them.
  - If there is a person whom we know has been hurt by our attitudes, words or actions, and with whom we have not made amends. – if so, now call that person to mind, ask God for the help to forgive yourself for this injustice, and find the courage to express your sorrow to the person, even though they may already have forgiven you.
  - If there are tensions within your family, amongst your friendship group or work colleagues name these, offer them to God and pray for the hearts of all involved to be softened so that forgiveness may occur and harmony be restored.
- The angel of the north image represents the hand of God constantly watching over creation.

- As we listen to this 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 you'll never walk alone – COVID 19 version: <https://youtu.be/6qpoJNv5dlQ>

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 made them a promise: what was that? Check who remembers

- That the Holy Spirit, the power from on high would be given to them – as promised by the Father – what other names are used for the Holy Spirit?

**FF** - Holy Ghost is a term previously used as an alternative to Spirit. Other terms are the Paraclete or the Advocate.

- The word advocate means 'one who is summoned to help another'. Paraclete, comes from a Greek term meaning 'called to the side of' and so has the same meaning.

At each of the post resurrection appearances Jesus greets the disciples by saying: 'peace be with you.' In the Hebrew Scriptures, peace was one of the distinguishing marks of the time of the Messiah, Jesus' gift of peace confirms that he is the longed-for Messiah.

Anointed with the oil of Chrism we receive the Holy Spirit in 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** invite the young people to imagine they have been there witnessing the encounter between Jesus and the disciples. As they listen to the reading:

**Ponder** (then share responses)

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

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

- Reflect back on a period in your life when you were anxious, troubled or afraid. How did the situation resolve itself? In what ways did you experience a sense of peace after the turmoil?

**FF** - Each of us needs support when experiencing difficult times. The people who become our advocates are the presence of the Holy Spirit for us.  
- We can also call on the Holy Spirit for help directly, through prayer and an open heart.

- During the week ahead, look for opportunities to stand up for or offer support to someone in need of an advocate.
- Look for ways you might bring the gift of peace to someone whose heart is troubled or afraid.

## Going Deeper

- **Ponder** (*then share responses*)  
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.
  - What do you think the role of the Holy Spirit is in the life of the Church today and in your own life?
  - Think of situations happening in the world at present, images and stories seen in the news.
  - How is the presence or activity of the Holy Spirit evident – give concrete examples.

- **Holy Spirit Reflection**

Make yourself comfortable and restful. Relax and block out all your day to day worries. Focus on your breathing. Set up a pattern of slow rhythmic breathing. Let your breathing become peaceful.

As you breathe in say “Come” and as you breathe out say “Holy Spirit”. Feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in the atmosphere around you. The Spirit of God is with us for we are gathered in God's name. The Spirit is with each of us, as well as with all of us.

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament was understood:

- as a presence of the breath of God;
- as giving power for mission;
- as an inner emotional fire;
- as the feminine face of God;
- in the imagery of cloud, water and in nature.

Before the creation of the world, the Spirit was brooding over the waters (Genesis 1:2). Creatures, including human beings, exist because God gives them ruach, the breath of life (Genesis 2:7)

They remain alive only so long as they have the divine breath abiding in them (Genesis 6:3). God's Word and God's Spirit act together to create the cosmos: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made and all their host by the breath of his mouth.” (Psalm 33:6) “If he should take back his Spirit to himself, and gather to himself his breath, all flesh would perish together, all mortals return to dust.” (Job 34:14-15)

“Let all creatures serve you, because you spoke and they were made. You sent forth your spirit and it formed them.” (Judith 16:14)

What images of the Holy Spirit does this leave with you?

Both Mary and Elizabeth were filled with the Holy Spirit, as was Jesus himself. He also promised us the Holy Spirit as an advocate – a supporter and a guide – forever.

When Jesus had been baptised and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'you are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased'. (Luke 3:21-22)

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. (Luke 4:1)

Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor know him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you".

- *Imagine you were present on these occasions. What is your reaction to the events that occurred and the words that were spoken?*

Christian writers used images of the natural world to explain the Holy Spirit. God the Father was seen as the sun with Jesus the sunbeam coming to earth and the Holy Spirit the light and warmth brought to the earth by the sun and the sunbeam.

An image of a river with God as its source, Christ is seen as flow of the river and the Holy Spirit irrigates the land to bring forth vegetation.

Plants have a hidden root (the Father). A shoot coming out of the ground into the world is Jesus and the plant itself bringing forth leaves, fruits and seeds the Holy Spirit.

These images show the Holy Spirit as the producer of the final, fruitful effect.

- *What will it be like to hand over each day to God to be guided by the Holy Spirit and to live it according to his will?*

The Spirit gives each person a piece of wisdom; No-one has all the wisdom; The pieces fit together, if we are open to that Spirit.

- **Prayerful response:** Picking up on any words or thoughts linked to the reflection Invite the young people to create a simple prayer that is relevant to their own lives.

## Closing Prayer

- Gather in a circle / semi-circle around the prayer focus.
  - Leader picks up the candle saying:  
***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: ***Come*** by Gregory Norbet

Spirit, come, transform us.

Come, be our breath, be our hope. Spirit, come, transform us.

Come, be our breath, be our hope.

Deep in the womb of our heart reveal your presence, O God. Spirit, come, transform us. Come, be our breath, be our hope. Spirit, come, transform us. Come, be our breath, be our hope.

Draw us to share others' burdens healing and loving with truth. Spirit, come, transform us.

Come, be our breath, be our hope. Spirit, come, transform us. Come, be our breath, be our hope.

You are the grace that sustains us, comforting spirit of God. Spirit, come, transform us. Come, be our breath, be our hope. Spirit, come, transform us. Come, be our breath, be our hope.

Light for our summers of wholeness fire for our winters of pain. Spirit, come, transform us.

Come, be our breath, be our hope. Spirit, come, transform us. Come, be our breath, be our hope. Come, be our breath, be our hope.

## 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

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