



SESSION **4** OF 4

Ascension



MEETING AIM

To explore what it means to be a follower of Jesus.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 1:1-11



BACKGROUND

This session explores the ascension of Jesus; a truly bizarre story for us to imagine. As the story is situated after the Gospels, in Acts, this passage marks the beginning of a new chapter for the disciples: the moment Jesus ascends to heaven and leaves the disciples with jobs to do! The aim of the activities is to try to better imagine the event, and also its implications on what it means to be a follower of Jesus after he has physically left us.

GATHERING TIME



As the group members arrive and settle down, begin a discussion about who they might pinpoint as some of the most influential people in global history. Encourage them to think about historic people and actions that have changed their lives today, and how influential people have changed the world for better or worse.

INTRO ACTIVITY



You will need: two chairs

Set up two chairs in the middle of the group and ask for two volunteers to begin acting out a scene between two people. It might help to give them a scenario to start off with, for example two children having a picnic, or Jeremy Corbyn and Theresa May having a conversation in an office. The couple act out the scenario, improvising as they go, until someone else shouts: "Freeze!" At this point, the person who has shouted out swaps places and positions with one of the actors to replace them in the scene. They then begin a completely new scenario, which the original person in the scene has to follow along with.

Explain that the game links with

today's passage, which looks at a brand new chapter of faith and adventures in the life of the disciples as Jesus ascends to heaven and leaves them with his final commissions.

BIBLE EXPLORATION



You will need: Bibles; large sheets of paper; paint; paintbrushes; pictures of the ascension

Give out the paper, paint and brushes. Read out the Bible passage and ask the group to interpret what the ascension might have looked like by painting the scene. It might be helpful to show the group images of Renaissance paintings depicting the ascension. It's a completely bizarre event to try and picture, so allow them to think creatively, elaborately and bizarrely!

You might have a space in a youth room or on a church noticeboard that you could share the group's paintings on after your session.

It might be helpful to read the passage out again as they paint, or to discuss what it might have looked like. If Renaissance painting feels a bit too aspirational, you could encourage them to think about colour, abstract images, or even cartoon-style paintings.

CHATTING TOGETHER



Encourage the group to reflect on the passage by chatting about it, using the following questions as prompts for discussion:

- How did the disciples feel about Jesus leaving them and beginning a new chapter?
- How do you think Jesus felt about it?
- Why do you think Jesus chose to say the words he did in the passage before he ascended?
- What do you think it would have been like for the disciples once Jesus had disappeared from view? What would they have done next?

CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: large sheet of paper; marker pen; Bibles

Draw out a grid on a large sheet of paper. On the left-hand side, write the heading: "Things Jesus had taught the disciples" and on the right, add

the corresponding heading: "How the disciples were meant to use these lessons to continue his work".

Ask the group to think about the different things Jesus taught his disciples. Write these in the left-hand column, then discuss how the disciples may have continued to use these lessons even after Jesus had ascended. If the group is struggling to think of examples, you could point them to stories like the feeding of the 5,000 or moments of teaching, like Jesus' parables or the Beatitudes.

It might be helpful to give the group some easy-to-use youth Bibles so they can hunt for moments that feel relevant. You could begin with the two final things Jesus tells his disciples in this passage: to wait for the Holy Spirit and to continue as his witnesses throughout the world.

PRAYER



You will need: balloons and helium; ribbon; luggage label; felt-tip pens

Before the session, blow up one balloon per person. Tie a ribbon to each balloon and a luggage label to the end of the ribbon.

Give out the balloons and chat with the group about what it means to be witnesses of Jesus in the world today. Ask them to write a word that captures what they would like to be as a witness of Jesus, such as 'kind', 'just' or 'joyful' as a prayer for themselves.

Once the young people have written their words on their luggage labels, ask them to hold the ribbons so the balloons float above their heads. Pray out loud and invite the group to pray about anything they have discovered during the session.

Ask them to take their balloons home as a reminder that after Jesus ascended into heaven the disciples were reminded to get on with his work. This is the task for all of us today! Warn the group not to let go of their balloons outside as they can cause litter and damage to wildlife when they pop and come back down to earth.

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