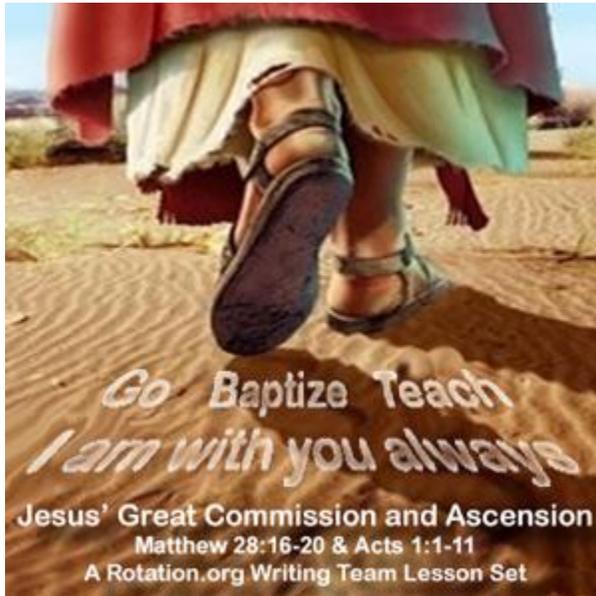


The Great Commission and Ascension of Jesus

Bible Background and Lesson Objectives



Scripture for this Lesson Set

[Matthew 28:16-20](#) "The Great Commission"

Excerpt: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...."

[Acts 1:1-11](#) Luke's second account of the Ascension of Jesus

Excerpts: "...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere...." (and) After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud...." (then) "two white-robed men suddenly stood among them." "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven?"

Lesson Objectives

Each student will gain...

- A working memory of Jesus' words in the Great Commission from Matthew 28, Jesus' "final instructions" to his disciples.

We don't often stress scripture memory in these sets, but this is one of those passages that summarizes many important things so succinctly and is so well-known and often quoted in the Church, that we want our students to know it well. To wit, you'll see a lot of great "memory hook" activities in the lessons of this set.

- A basic knowledge about the meaning of each keyword or phrase in Jesus' Great Commission "instructions," and be able to share examples of how they are *or could be* following that instruction.

For reasons explained below, the Great Commission is the focus of this set, and the Ascension less so.

Why Teach the Great Commission and Ascension of Jesus?

The "Great Commission" and "Ascension of Jesus" answer the question "WHAT DO WE DO NOW?" They are the resurrected Jesus' final instructions to his Disciples and the promise that the Holy Spirit (Jesus' and his Father's Spirit!) will guide them and move them to action.

While the wording of Jesus' instructions and the details of his Ascension vary between the Gospels, each Gospel's ending, and the beginning of Acts, share a common message:

***Jesus is still with us,
We are not alone.
It's time to get to work!
And the Spirit is here to help you.***



Believe



Witness

rotation.org



Love

Bible Background

Each Gospel tells a different story about what happened to Jesus after the Resurrection. But as we will see, they all address the same important question, "**What do we do now?** and **How will we be able to do it?**"

In essence, these are the same questions at the end of every Sunday School lesson.

What now? and How?

Unlike many other stories shared between the Gospels, the endings of Matthew, Luke, and John each have their own unique details about what Jesus said and did after the Resurrection.

- In Matthew's Gospel, the Disciples are told to "go, baptize, teach, ...*And remember I will be with you always....*" etc. **but Matthew has no Ascension story.** There's no standing around watching Jesus go.
- At the end of Luke, and at the beginning of Luke's Book of Acts, there is an Ascension story with only simple instructions. **There is no "Great Commission" in Luke or Acts.** In his Acts version of the Ascension, Luke adds the detail about the two angels appearing to tell the Disciples to stop standing around looking in the sky for Jesus and go wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- In John's Gospel, Jesus briefly talks to the Disciples in the upper room. **In John, there is no "great" commission or Ascension.**

- We did not include Mark's ending for reasons explained in a little bit.

Yet the Great Commission and Ascension belong together as one story. They are the first two "acts" of a three-act story that culminates in the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2). For the purposes of teaching these stories to children, we will thus be ignoring some of the differences between the Gospel accounts for two reasons. First, children need a clear and logical narrative. And second, because together they point to the big question all four Gospels arrive at — the "what now?" ...what we as disciples are supposed to be doing now that Christ has risen.

The Great Commission: *What disciples are supposed to do.*

The Great Commission answers the question "what are disciples supposed to do after the Resurrection?"

- What do we do with the knowledge of Easter?
- Who and how do we follow now that Jesus' body is gone?
- Where is Jesus in our lives?
- What is Jesus calling us to do?

See the "Question Bank" later in this background for some great questions to ask students.

Matthew, whose "Great Commission" we will focus on in this lesson set, places Jesus' final instructions on a mountaintop in Galilee. They are arguably some of the most eloquent verses in all the Gospels:

Matthew 28:16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Go, disciple, baptize, teach, and remember I'm with you.

The Ascension: *Don't Just Stand There!*

Luke tells the story of the Ascension twice, while Matthew and John don't mention it. Only Luke seems to be interested in telling people where Jesus' body went after the Resurrection. But even for Luke "where did he go?" isn't really the point. The point is voiced by the angels in Luke's second version of the Ascension found in Acts 1: "Don't just stand there looking in the sky!"

"While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them and said, 'Men of Galilee, why are you standing here staring into heaven?'" (Acts 1:11)

And then the angels tell the Disciples to go get ready for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Luke, Acts, Matthew's Great Commission, and Paul's letters all teach us that our faith needs to be LED BY THE SPIRIT if we are to follow through on Jesus' instructions to love, forgive, and bring peace.

A Spirit-led faith makes you want to go tell others, welcome them into the family of God (baptize), share Jesus' words of life (teach), and trust that Jesus is *with us now and always*.

Jesus' final "Great" words and his Ascension are like the call to the Pentecost starting line.

Like those first disciples, we hear and believe, and then by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are joyfully propelled into the world to tell others the Good News.



Question Bank

- What does it mean to "witness" about Jesus? What are the non-verbal ways we "witness" about Jesus? (actions, choices, attitudes)
- Name 10 places that are part of the "everywhere" Jesus commissioned us to tell the Good News.
- What is the Good News about Jesus? ...about your sins? ...about your life?
- Why would people "stand around" instead of doing what Jesus asks them to do?
- In what ways do people "stand around" at home, among their friends, at church, at school, when they see needs? When someone is hurt?
- What are some of the excuses people use for "standing around" and not following through on what Jesus asked them to do?
- How do you know what Jesus wants you to do? (Read Matthew 28! Pray. Listen. Get involved.)
- What are you doing to "tell" (show, demonstrate) others about the Messiah?
- How do you "receive the Holy Spirit"?
- How can you focus on helping to bring the Kingdom, rather than "getting into heaven"?
- What are some other words for "Go"?
- What are the "nations" of people we are asked to share Jesus with? (Don't just think of countries.)
- What does it mean to baptize someone "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit?"

- What are you doing (or could be doing) to "teach" your siblings, friends, family members about life, love, forgiveness?
- How do you know Jesus is "with you always"?
- What is "the end of the age"?



The Case of the Missing Ascension Stories

As mentioned, Matthew and John have no Ascension story. From a storyteller's point of view, they are like books without a neat ending. ***What happened to Jesus' body?*** Only Luke seems to know the Ascension story, or feel it is important enough to include in both his Gospel and Book of Acts.

Why didn't Matthew and John record an Ascension story?

We don't know, but by the time of their writing, Jesus' body was indeed gone, and many were expecting him to return. Luke's Gospel thus addresses the question that was surely on the minds of many: "where and how did he leave?" But, as we are learning, there are more important questions.

Mark's Ascension story or lack thereof... It is widely accepted by Bible scholars that the reference to the Ascension in Mark 16:9-20 was a later addition, probably by a scribe in the 2nd Century A.D. The earliest manuscripts do not include it. Was there an original ending that went missing? Nobody knows. But what the later addition DOES tell us is that by the 2nd Century A.D. Luke's Gospel ending was considered the standard.

The lack of Ascension details in Matthew and John are another reminder that their inspired human authors were probably not the original disciples—as one can imagine that the "original" Matthew and John would have included such a spectacular personal experience! But they don't. Instead, it is left to Luke, a Gentile convert and disciple of Paul writing some 40 years after the Resurrection, to preserve the story of Christ's ascension that was circulating in those early days.

The earliest Christian writing we have comes from Paul's 1st letter to the Thessalonians. Written around 52 A.D., it reveals that "What Now?" and "Don't Just Stand There!" were issues that the first Christians were talking about. Paul praises the Thessalonian Christians for "sharing their joy." *"...wherever we go we find people telling us about your faith in God."* (1 Thes 1:8) The Thessalonians were people who were following Jesus' final instructions to "be witnesses," and "go make disciples." But intertwined with Paul's praise, and expressed more energetically in his second letter to them, Paul warns against complacency and laziness among those **waiting around for Jesus' return, ...waiting to see his body.** In essence, **Paul exhorts the early Christians to live like Jesus never left.** *"We urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God..."* (1 Thes 4:1)

To Paul and early Christians, Jesus hadn't left them. The site or location of his body was irrelevant because his Spirit—the Holy Spirit—was alive and well, and dwelling among them.

So the "missing" stories or details are only odd until you see a larger truth. What mattered MOST to Matthew, John, Luke, Paul, and the early Church was that Jesus was still alive and present, and calling them to a new way of living. **The dispensation, disposal, or location of Jesus' body was (and is) irrelevant to those who feel his presence and know he is alive.** This is the one thing Matthew, Luke, John, and Paul all agree on in different expressions and places within their writings –that *Jesus is still with us.* The Doctrine of the Trinity which emerged in the early Church made that clear.

BTW: Where did the Ascension happen?

Strangely, Matthew 28 puts Jesus on a mountain in Galilee (not the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem as Luke states), where Jesus issues his "great

commission." But Matthew ends it there with no ascension into heaven. The setting sure **sounds** like Luke's Ascension story, but Matthew does not include Ascension details. This is puzzling until you look at the very last statement Jesus makes in Matthew, "*Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*" Imagine if Matthew's Jesus had said "*I'm always with you,*" and then Matthew had ended with, "*and then he went up to heaven.*" Such fascinating questions remind us that the Gospels are not *news reports, and that there were many details about Jesus floating around in those early days that could not all fit into one book.*

More on Jesus' "Final Instructions"

Though we are concentrating on Matthew 28's "Great Commission" passage, it is important to note that both Luke and John also preserve remembrances of Jesus' "final instructions," albeit, with different words and context.

In **Luke 24:48**, Jesus' final words to the Disciples **take place on the Mount of Olives outside of Jerusalem.** They are to preach the forgiveness of sins to all nations in his name and to expect the Spirit. Luke takes a second crack at Jesus' final words when he writes the Book of Acts, saying, "*And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*" (Acts 1:8)

John 20 places Jesus' final instructions in the story of Jesus' appearance in the upper room. "*...he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. ...and he said, "Peace be with you. **As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.**" Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."* Then later in John 21, the Risen Jesus tells Peter to "feed my sheep." (But there is no Ascension story.)

In Matthew, Jesus' last words are "I am with you always...." So I think we can understand why Matthew didn't include the Ascension. Hard to imagine Jesus saying "I'm with you always" and then leaving!

John's Gospel also leaves the question of "where did he go?" up in the air so to speak. John ends with Jesus sharing a meal with the disciples on the beach, and then the quick conclusion, "*there are also many other things that*

Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would have been written."

To these early writers, there was no "end" to Jesus' story, only a new beginning.

Written by Rev. Neil MacQueen for the Rotation.org Writing Team
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The Great Commission and Ascension of Jesus

Video Workshop



Summary of Activities

After a brief Bible study quiz game, students will watch Jesus' "final instructions"* and Ascension as depicted in the movie, "Son of God" (2014). After discussing Jesus' instructions, and the memorable response to the Ascension that Peter offers in the movie, students will make a video of the Great Commission in a special way to aid their memorization of it.

This lesson shares a number of insights into the differences between the Gospel accounts.

Scripture for the Lesson (*final instructions spoken by Jesus in the movie)

1. When the Holy Spirit comes to you, you will receive power. (Acts 1:8)
2. The power of the Holy Spirit can be with you all wherever you are. (similar to Matthew 28:20)
3. Go into the world and preach the Gospel to all creation. (Quoting Mark 16:15 and alluding to Matthew 28:19)
4. Peace be with you. (John 20:21)

*Each Gospel has a different version of what we are calling "Jesus' final instructions." In Matthew, they are expanded and known as "The Great Commission." The Son of God movie uses a line from each Gospel. This lesson's opening "quiz" looks at some of these scriptures and shares some insights into the Gospel accounts. The scripture memory activity at the end of this lesson uses Matthew's Great Commission.

Memory Verse Activity Scripture

[Matthew 28:16-20](#) ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Lesson Objectives

Link to the [Bible Background](#) at rotation.org for this set's complete list of objectives.

Preparation and Materials

- Read the [Bible Background](#) and scripture.
- Half sheets of paper, four for each students. Markers.
- Bibles.
- A copy of Son of God (2014). Preview chapter 35 and cue it up to show your students.

- Whiteboard or large sheet of paper (marker).
- A DVD player and TV screen or LCD projector to show the movie.
- A video camera or smartphone with a video camera. Don't forget the cables to connect the camera to your screen.

About the Son of God Video Clip

Chapter 35, the last chapter in the Son of God DVD menu, features Jesus speaking his final instructions before ascending. Interestingly, the movie has Jesus speaking one verse each from Matthew, Mark, John and Acts (Luke). The four lines together are similar to Matthew's Great Commission, though without Matthew's word-smithing talents. Following that scene, the very last scene in the movie features the disciple John on the island of Patmos. The movie started there with him writing his Gospel and now finishes there with an appearance of Jesus. ***It's a scene meant to evangelize the audience.*** While not in the Bible, it is biblical in the sense that it does portray the idea that Jesus is still alive and comes to us with his Word and Call. It will likely confuse younger children, but you may choose to show it at your discretion to older students. Perhaps show it at the end of class if you have time to discuss the question, "*how does Jesus come to YOU today with this same message?*"

A fan has posted a low-resolution clip of part of [Son of God's Ascension scene on YouTube](#). Here it is for preview purposes only. **The Great Commission and Ascension scene starts at 3:20.** See the next post in this thread for why we chose the Son of God movie Ascension scene for this lesson, and not those seen in other movies.

Lesson Plan

Opening and Scripture Readings

Welcome your students and describe what they'll be doing in today's lesson.

Ask your student to define the word "Ascension" and what it describes. Fill in their answer.

Conduct the following scripture reading "disguised" as a quiz. Its point is to introduce today's scripture and teach students some interesting information about the Gospel stories of Jesus' final instructions and Ascension. They are not expected to know the right answers -but will afterward!

Opening Quiz

Have each student write the names Matthew, Mark, Luke, John on four cards or half sheets of paper. They will hold up what they think is the right answer(s).

Question 1: This writer is the only writer who tells the story of Jesus going up into heaven TWICE, the first time in his Gospel, and the second time in his Book of Acts which he also wrote.

(Answer: Luke-Acts. Explain that Acts was also written by Luke to tell the story of the Disciples and Early Church. Invite your students to find both stories in Luke 24 and Acts 1.)

Bonus to Question 1: Luke tells almost the same Ascension story in both his Gospel of Luke and Book of Acts. But in only one of them he adds the story that two angels appeared to the Disciples after Jesus had gone into heaven. The angels ask the Disciples, "why are you standing looking in the sky?" Does Luke tell the story of the angels in Luke or in Acts?

(Acts. Help students find and read together **Acts 1:1-11**. Ask: What were the angels trying to tell the Disciples? What's wrong with standing around looking for Jesus? Jesus wants us to serve!)

Question 2: Which Gospels do not have a story about of Jesus going up to heaven? Is it Matthew, Mark, John, two of them or all three?

(Answer: Both Matthew and John are correct. Ask: Why do you think they don't tell that story? This is a good opportunity to teach the uniqueness of the four Gospels. You might add that in Matthew, Jesus' final words are "*I am with you always, to the end of the age.*" and maybe Matthew wanted to emphasize that promise and thus,

did not include the scene of Jesus going to heaven. To make this point, and to teach the fact that the Gospels don't record every story about Jesus, have students turn to John 20:30-31 and read together John's final words: *Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe[b] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*)

Question 3: The ending of this Gospel is a summary of the final instructions of Jesus to his disciples as found in the other Gospels.

(Answer: Mark. Open your Bibles and **read Mark 16:15-19**. You might mention to older students that most scholars believe Mark's Gospel is missing its ending in the earliest manuscripts, and that the end of Mark was added later by somebody other than Mark, perhaps someone familiar with the other Gospels. Most Bibles mention this in a footnote.)

Final Quiz Question: In the video clip we are about to see, we will hear Jesus speak his final instructions. See if you can guess which Gospel or Book of Acts that the actor portraying Jesus is speaking from. Anybody want to guess ahead of time??

Show the Video Clip from Son of God

(Read the note about it found at the top of this lesson plan, and decide if and when you will show the final scene.)

Provide some context for this part of the story. Jesus has Risen. He's been appearing to the Disciples and talking to people, and now it is time for his body to leave the earth. *According to Matthew, Jesus meets the Disciples on a mountainside in Galilee. According to Luke, this took place near Bethany outside of Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives.*

Discussion of the Video Clip:

Ahead of time, write out the "final instructions" heard in the movie on a large sheet of paper/flipchart (see below). Write the Book/Chapter/Verse answers below the four lines of scripture. Keep them covered until after the clip is over.

After the video is over, reveal the four lines, and ask the students to MATCH the LINES to the SCRIPTURE PASSAGE.

Ask: Which Gospels did those final words come from? Use your Bibles to find out!

1. When the Holy Spirit comes to you, you will receive power. (Acts 1:8)
2. The power of the Holy Spirit can be with you all wherever you are. (similar to Matthew 28:20)
3. Go into the world and preach the Gospel to all creation. (Quoting Mark 16:15 and alluding to Matthew 28:19)
4. Peace be with you. (John 20:21) This phrase is recorded in two of the Gospels and seems to be one of Jesus' familiar greetings to his friends.

Focus:

Ask: What were Peter's very next words after Jesus had gone?

(Ask for guesses first, and **then replay the video clip** of Jesus' last words and then Peter's exhortation. It will only take 3 minutes and will be a good reinforcement. Note that Peter's words are not in scripture.)

Peter said, "*My Brothers, My Sisters, We Have Work to Do!*"

Ask: What "work" is Peter referring to?

Write their responses on the board. then say the following: To organize the disciples and believers, Peter and the Disciples formed churches in the towns and villages where believers lived. They called these organizations "churches."

Ask: What does a church do? (Worship, Teach, Place of Compassion and Inclusion, Collect and Distribute Resources, what else?)

Ask: Where do we do this work? Just at church? Where could YOU do this work in your life?

Ask: Why do we do this work? Is it easy? Who promised to help us do it?

Make A Video Remembering the Words of the Great Commission

Say: Matthew crafts Jesus' "final instructions" into a set of very memorable and important five statements. These words are often heard in worship, and are some of the most memorized words in the New Testament.

I will assign a line to each of you to remember. Then I will turn on my video camera and when I point it at you, say your line. Here's the fun twist: if you get it wrong or stumble, I will move back to the first person to start the Great Commission all over again. Our goal is to record on video a perfect version of Matthew's Great Commission ~ Jesus' final instructions to all of us.

1. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
2. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations
3. baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
4. teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
5. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Notes to the Teacher:

Adjust to the needs of your students. If one student has trouble remembering their line exactly, you can help them, have them repeat after you, or whatever gets you through it. But don't make it too easy. Making them "work for it" and "do over" will help their memorization process.

You can write these five lines on the board for a practice session.

If you have more than five students, have two students say the same line at the same time. If you have fewer than five students, include yourself or a helper in the recitation, or have the entire class repeat the final line.

If you have extra time, videotape them a second time going as fast as they can through the Commission without making a mistake.

Reflect

View your Great Commission Video, and talk about ways we can share our video testimony with others (which follows Jesus' instructions to tell the world!).

You may also view the last scene in the movie of John meeting Jesus on Patmos. Set up the clip using the notes about it found above. The Point: The Risen Jesus still comes to us, calls to us and is changing lives.

Adaptations

For Younger Students: Eliminate the opening Bible study quiz, and substitute a reading from an illustrated Bible of Acts 1:1-11 or the Great Commission from Matthew 28. This will also give you more time to work on making the memory video. Non-readers can memorize lines of scripture if you work with them to "repeat after me" a few times, then have them repeat without your help. They will love seeing themselves on the screen.

Written by the Rotation.org Writing Team
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SCIENCE Workshop Demonstration Lessons and Ideas for Jesus' Ascension



[Wormy the Helpful Worm](#) Site Admin [Supporting Member!](#) Super Admin

Ascension Science Workshop Ideas

We've collected below a series of **demonstrations that illustrate ideas and verses** from the story of Jesus' Ascension. in Matthew 28 and Acts 1. In the Workshop Rotation Model, these demonstrations are sometimes used in a workshop designed to look like a "science" lab. They can be used in any teaching opportunity to illustrate the point.

Three Demonstrations about "Being witnesses" or "Go make disciples"

Scripture: Acts 1: 1-11 or Matthew 28:16-20

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them..."

(1) Glo in the Dark lotion demonstration... "GLOW INTO ALL THE WORLD!"

illustrating how we share and care ("witness") person to person.



Search Amazon or science classroom supply stores online for "Glow Germ Lotion." It goes on invisible and only appears when you shine a blacklight on it. Some Glow Germ packages can be purchased with a small blacklight. The effect is fun and it's an awesome metaphor.

There are many ways you can "play" this experiment.

SECRETLY give ONE PERSON a squirt of GLOW hand lotion and have him or her rub it in well. Then play a quick game (any game that involves touching, such as [tag or freeze tag, or octopus tag](#)) and use the blacklight to see where and who the glow lotion has gotten onto.

Now give some lotion to those who got a lot of it on them from the original "disciple" and play another quick variation of tag. Then stop to see

Finally: Stand in a LINE. Have the first person lotion-up and QUOTE Jesus' words to the next person in line. As they say it, shake their hand so that the "glow" is passed. Now that person repeats the Great Commission to the next person in line while shaking THEIR hand, and so on until the words have been shared with everyone. Now check to see how much everyone is GLOWING!

TIP: Use an abbreviated version of the Great Commission for this game. Something like: *"Go into all the world and make disciples. Baptize them, teach them my commandments, and don't worry, I am with you always."* In fact, you could make it a class activity to CREATE this shortened simpler version of the Great Commission.

Discuss:

- What does this demonstration say about how the Good News is passed along to others? (Personally, among peers and friends.)
- What does this demonstration say about our responsibility to "pass on the glow" to others?

Follow up:

Use Glow in the Dark Paints to make "GLOW INTO ALL THE WORLD"

posters reminding us of Jesus' "final instructions" at his ascension.

Buy an inexpensive blacklight bulb and a clamp lamp to make your "GO MAKE" posters glow.



(2) Magnet & paper clips, "the power running through us."

Can you pick up the paper clips with needle/scissors just by touching them? Can you with the magnet? Rub the magnet on the metal needle or steel scissors then try to pick up.

Next, use wires attached to a magnet and metal clip to show how the Holy Spirit is the source of our power to witness/share, attract. What happens when we disconnect from the Spirit? etc. One person alone can spread the Good News of Jesus – the message must be shared. If we keep the Holy Spirit within us we will rub off on others.

Editor's Note: There is a full lesson plan in [the Writing Team's "Peter Sinks, Jesus Saves"](#) Science Workshop lesson that features building a take-home magnet. It could EASILY be adapted for this "witnessing" lesson.

(3) Blacklight -revealing the work and presence of God among us.

Black construction paper/ dye free laundry detergent (Purex works great and is cheap)/Q-tips/small black light. You can also use CLEAR glo-in-in-the-dark paints. Have them write their name thickly with the Purex on the paper. Can you see it if I turn out the light? No. Turn on Black Light and the name glows.

Alternate: Spread the paint on your hands and with lights-on, touch other student's hands to "pass" our beliefs and traditions. Name them as you do. Then turn on the blacklight to see who's been touched. We can't always see where God has been moving unless we know what and how to look for his presence, and the presence of his faithful witnesses.

"Wormy" is Rotation.org's administrative account used for managing and creating content. Quite often, "Wormy" is Rev. Neil MacQueen, our lead writer and webmaster, but it can also be used by some of the other volunteer Christian educators who help with our site. [Learn more](#) about us and our leaders.

Attachments

[Hide](#)

5/13/147:30 PM



Replies sorted oldest to newest



[Resource Droid](#)"The Resource Droid you've been looking for" **[Supporting Member!](#)**

Here's a simple object lesson / science experiment kids can do too and reproduce at home:



Attachments

[Show](#)

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The Great Commission and Ascension of Jesus

The Great Bible Board Game Workshop

Summary of Activities

Students will play a giant board game all about Jesus' Great Commission and Ascension, that focuses on key verses and their life application.

Scripture for the Lesson

[Matthew 28:16-20](#) and [Acts 1:1-11](#)

Key/Memory Verse: ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Lesson Objectives

See the [Bible Background](#) at rotation.org for this set's complete list of objectives.

About the Game Board in the Great Bible Game Workshop

- The recommended gameboard in this lesson is one you create on the wall for all to see. You can paint or draw it on a large bed sheet, or a large area of butcher paper. See the graphic below and instructions handout for board layout and suggestions. Add your own design to make it visually fun.
- The game "cards" your student draw as they land on various squares take your students through the Great Commission and Ascension scriptures and reward their responses to each card's life application question. The teacher awards 1 or 2 points for each answer based on

the answer. The game is "over" when they accumulate 20 points (or however many you want to set). If they finish early, mix up the teams and start the game again!

Preparation and Materials



- Read the [Bible Background](#) and scripture.
- [Print the attached Game Instructions and Cards](#) (attached)
- Create the dice to throw. (See description below and on the handout.)
- Create the giant game board on a wall. See suggestions below.
- Position a lectern next to the gameboard for players to step forward (and up to) to read the Bible verses as directed by the cards they draw. Have the two Bible story passages pre-printed in large print in the translation of your choice, or opened and bookmarked.
- Position a "scoreboard" next to the gameboard to keep track of how many points each team is accumulating. The scoreboard can also be incorporated into the gameboard.

Lesson Plan

The game features the reading and discussion of most of the verses in the Great Commission (in Matthew) and Ascension scriptures (from Acts). Thus, prior to playing, you only need to read through the scriptures in their entirety. The "cards" in the game will provide the discussion.

Open

Looking at the gameboard...

Ask: Most games go in one direction. Does this game look like it has an ending or a goal? What is the ending or goal of being a Disciple of Jesus? (They will most likely say "heaven" but that's not really our goal. Heaven is not a reward for doing good --that would be "works." Our goal is to please or glorify God*, ...to be faithful no matter where life takes us.)

Invite students to step forward to the lectern and take turns reading the Matthew 28 and Acts 1 stories. Provide a little bit of context to each before reading. (Who, What, Where, and where we are in the Gospel story.)

Let's Play!

1. Divide into teams of two or three students each.
2. Have students sit together in front of the gameboard, leaving room for players to step forward. Teammates work together to answer questions.
3. Assign game markers and explain the game play. (see the handout)
4. As suggested in the handout, the teacher can adjust game play and game speed by adjusting the points they award, and introducing additional bonus cards if needed.
5. If you get done early, mix up the teams and play again!

Reflect

What is the most important question or point you learned in our game? To answer that, select three or four of the game cards and pass them out to your teams. Have them read the card aloud, including the verse. Once all the cards have been read, ask students to vote on which single card they think sounds like the most important verse and question/answer they learned today. This is entirely debatable, and students may have different answers.

Suggested cards to vote on:

Read Matthew 28:19 and answer: Name one way to NOT "make" (help) someone want to be a disciple of Jesus.



The Dice (1): Cover a square box (approx 10x10x10) with white paper and write the following on its six sides: 1, 2, 3, "Go Back 2 Spaces," "Bonus Card," "Caught Standing Around."

The Game Board: Draw/paint the game board on a large white bed sheet or large sheets of butcher paper so that it can hang on a wall. Tip: You can hang a bed sheet using removable "Command strip" wall clips. Hanging the gameboard on the wall makes it more visible to everyone and provides a focal point (as opposed to a "floor" gameboard often seen in Game Workshops which require more work to make, and from which the kids sometimes wander). See the handout for gameboard and game play instructions.



The Game Markers (one per team): If you're using a bedsheet to make your gameboard, you can create fun game markers small stuffed animals by tying a string around the marker and a safety pin, then using the pointy end of the pin to hang the marker on the sheet and move it from square to square. If you're using butcher paper, make fun markers ahead of time using lightweight foam paper, and then use fun-tack putty to stick the markers on the sheet.

Adaptations

For Younger Students: Have a teacher read the card verses and questions. Simplify some of the questions. Make adjustments to the gameplay to avoid frustration. For example, add another Bonus card that saves them from having to go back to the beginning, and add another "hint" bonus card they can use to get help with a response.

***Re: the Game's Goal.** It's not heaven. According to the famous question from Protestantism's famous Westminster Catechism, "the chief end of man is to glorify God." *That is*, to worship, honor, and point to God in all we do.

Written by the Rotation.org Writing Team

With contributions from Carol Hulbert, Sheila Butler, and Neil MacQueen

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The Great Commission and Ascension of Jesus

"Disciple Road Signs" Art Workshop



Summary of Activities

Students will participate in a **"Disciple Road Signs" guided discussion** in which they think of and create "road signs" to guide disciples in the way they should go—just like Jesus did in the Great Commission and at his Ascension.

Go and....
Stop to do ...
Stop doing...
Yield to...
No U-turns here...
Caution: Rough road ahead...
Here are the Dead Ends and Do Not Enters
Slow down to...
Disciples Under Construction
School Zone! What am I supposed to do here?
I break for Cross-walks
and more!

✔ The "Road Sign" metaphor is fun memory hook designed to help students recall and refresh your lesson every time they hit the road and see these familiar signs.

✔ The Road Signs "Packet" you'll print for each student is your lesson plan and has the scriptures in it. Print extra pages for "artistic do-overs."



Scripture for the Lesson

[Matthew 28:16-20](#) and [Acts 1:3-9](#)

Matthew 28 Key/Memory Verse: ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Lesson Objectives

See the [Bible Background](#) at [rotation.org](#) for this set's complete list of objectives.

Preparation and Materials



- Read the [Bible Background](#) and scripture.
- *Print copies of the Guided Discussion Road Signs Packet in color* on sturdy 70# white paper for each student. Be sure to make extra copies of drawing pages for students who want to "do over."
- Staple the Sign pages together to form a booklet.
- Gather a wide assortment of wide-tip "fluorescent" highlighters (plenty of yellow, red, orange for road signs).
- Gather black sharpie pens (permanent) for sign lettering and borders. Have an assortment of regular and fine tips, enough for each student.
- Square Box covered in white paper or a Spinner (see game on page 7 of attachment for details.)

Important Drawing & Paper Tips:

- Always fill in the sign color FIRST with your highlighter, then write the sign's message on top using the sharpie.
 - Do not use regular markers for sign lettering as they tend to bleed into the color and smear. You may use regular watercolor markers for the sign colors (yellow, red), but they won't be as bright as using highlighters will be.
 - The packet reminds students that signs are intentionally simple, bright, of few words, and often have easily recognizable images.
 - If possible, print your packet pages on heavy white paper, such as the 70# paper many churches use for their bulletins and newsletter, or card stock. Thin 20# copy paper tends to wrinkle up when too much marker is applied (and kids will do that).
-

Lesson Plan

Open

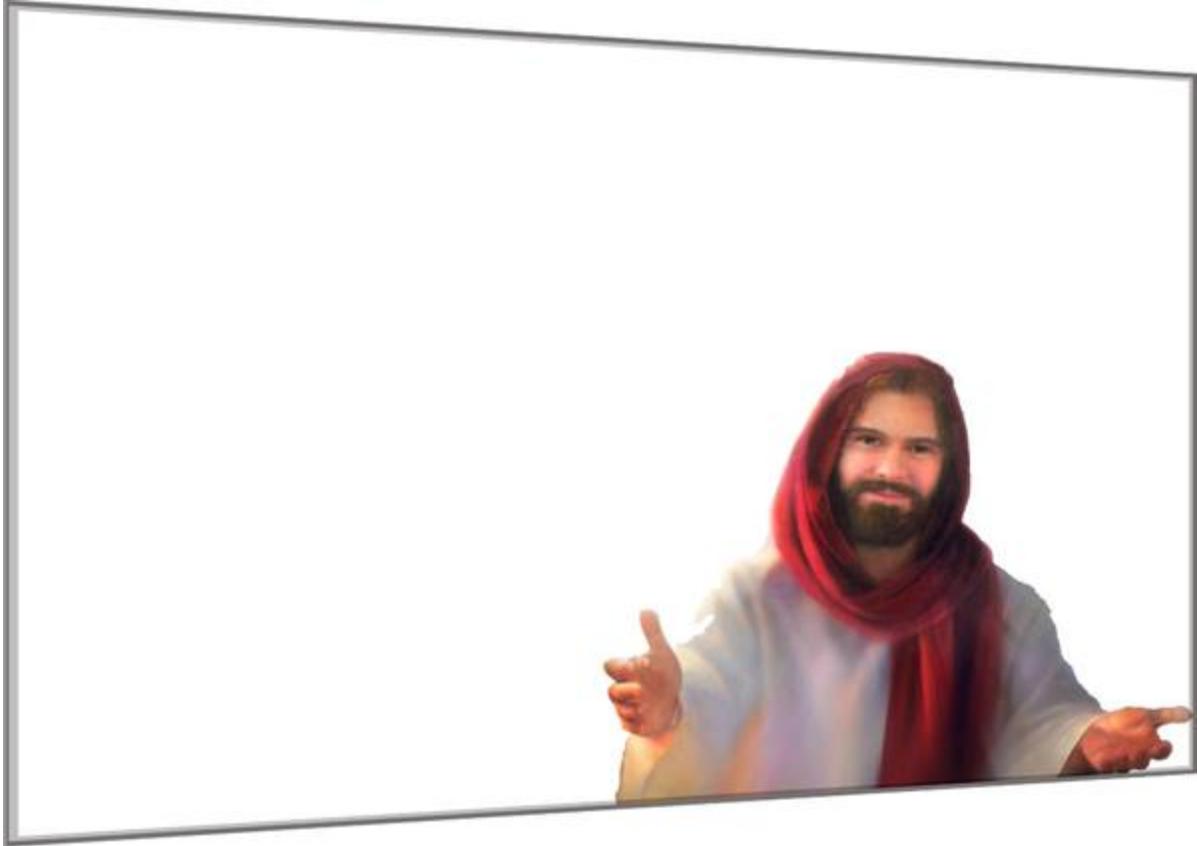
Welcome your students and explain what they'll be doing today. Introduce the idea of "Disciple Road Signs"—what signs Jesus might put up for us on our journey.

The Disciple Road Sign Packet

The Disciple Road Signs Packet is a guided discussion and activity. It is also your lesson plan.

It provides an intro, scriptures, and sign drawing activities related each line of the Great Commission. It includes an optional "I Wonder" reflection for those with time and older students. It also includes a quick game that uses thoughts from the packet and discussion to play the game.

Obviously, you'll want to have students share the signs they make. Encourage them to work quickly and give them help with sign ideas if needed.



Adaptations and Additional Suggestions

For Younger Students: Most non-readers are learning what signs mean and the simple sign words, like "STOP" mean. Help them with the sign lettering by asking for their ideas, then having a helper write it on the sign for them (so that their message can later be read back to them by a parent).

See the attached "blank" signs that may be helpful to younger students.

For Older Students or for Creating a Display: Use the packet for discussion and then have them either create a Disciple Sign on posterboard that can be hung in a hallway, or create more signs using extra copies of the Jesus Blank Sign found in the packet.

Written by the Rotation.org Writing Team
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