

LESSON 1

JESUS GIVES THE GREAT COMMISSION AND ASCENDS

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 28; Acts 1

GOD'S BIG STORY: Jesus—resurrected and alive—appears to the disciples on a mountain in Galilee. He commissions His followers to share the good news and promises to send the Holy Spirit as a helper, then ascends into the sky to heaven.

WORD OF WONDER: The Holy Spirit gives us power. —from Acts 1:8

- ArrivalActivity-Play Stations:
 - Helpers
 - Cotton Ball Clouds
 - Jesus Gives the Great Commission and Ascends Coloring Sheet
- Opening Curiosity Activity: Help Needed!
- Word of Wonder: From Acts 1:8
- Craft: Wind Chimes
 - Read the story!
- Circle Time: Bop the Balloon
 - older group dismiss to LG if necessary
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: Take You at Your Word, Happy Day
- God's Big Story: Jesus Gives the Great Commission and Ascends
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing
- Closing Game: Pop the Bubbles
- Return to Play Stations/God's Big Story Video





LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 28; Acts 1

WORD OF WONDER: From Acts 1:8

I bet the disciples could tell.

They'd been with the resurrected Jesus more than once, but this time something felt different. This time, they could sense it in their bones: He was leaving.

Maybe you've found yourself in that situation. People you love are heading toward the door, and you're not sure when you'll see them again. There's a long pause and then a promise: This isn't the end. We'll be together again.

Jesus promised His disciples that and more: The Holy Spirit was coming to fuel their faith and embolden their witness. Jesus wasn't abandoning them—He was moving into their lives in an entirely new way.

Read Matthew 28:16–20 and Acts 1:1–11. Picture yourself standing among the disciples as they receive Jesus' reassurance and promise. You belong there because His promise is to you too. As you embrace Jesus as Lord, like the disciples, you are also promised the presence of the Holy Spirit.

- In what ways do you sense the Holy Spirit speaking to you?
- In what corners of your life might you benefit from the power of the Holy Spirit?
- How would you explain to a friend what the Holy Spirit means to you? Thank Jesus for sending the Holy Spirit ... and open your heart to His gift.

—Mikal Keefer

Ministry Volunteer

Contributor to Wonder Ink

LESSON 1 **FOR LEADERS**
JESUS GIVES THE GREAT COMMISSION AND ASCENDS

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The 11 remaining disciples were with Jesus, and perhaps some of Jesus' other followers. Jesus told them to carry His message to Judea, Samaria, and to the whole world, which means that the good news was for everyone—not just the Jewish people.

WHAT?

The *What* is really a *Who*! Before ascending to heaven, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to help His followers complete the mission He gave them to share Jesus with the world. The Holy Spirit is God's powerful, wise, loving presence. The Holy Spirit is God.

WHERE?

Jesus brought His followers to the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12). Mountaintops were locations conducive to seeing and hearing God. Just as Moses met with God on a mountain, Jesus taught from a hill or mountain (Matthew 5:1), which conveys His authority.

WHEN?

Jesus is thought to have lived about 33 years, with about three years devoted to public ministry. After Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to His disciples and followers for 40 days before ascending to heaven.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, active throughout all of history. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit empowered people like Joseph, Moses, David, and Isaiah to represent God. Jesus promised that the same Spirit will be with His followers as they spread the gospel.



LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit
SCRIPTURE: Matthew 28; Acts 1
WORD OF WONDER: From Acts 1:8

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: toy figures or dolls, bin, cotton balls, scoops, large kid-sized plastic tweezers or tongs, bowls, cups, coloring utensils, dollhouses (optional), toy cars (optional), toy animals (optional), glue (optional)

RESOURCES: [Jesus Gives the Great Commission and Ascends Coloring Sheet \(1 per kid\)](#)

Greet the kids warmly and briefly explain the play stations to them. Invite them to play at any of the stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help you get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas about what we'll be learning today?

Play Station: Helpers

Set up: Set out toy people figures or dolls. If available, you can set out dollhouses, cars, toy animals, etc.

Play: Let the kids play with the figures and invite them to use the toys to act out scenarios where people help one another.

Play Station: Cotton Ball Clouds

Set up: Set out a bin filled with cotton balls. Provide a variety of scoops, tweezers or tongs, bowls, and cups.

Play: Let the kids play with the pretend "clouds" (cotton balls). Encourage them to work together to fill the containers and make different cloud shapes.

Play Station: Jesus Gives the Great Commission and Ascends Coloring Sheet

Set up: Ahead of time, print one copy per kid of the coloring sheet and set out coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. **The kids could also glue on cotton balls** to make the clouds look more realistic (or turn it over and draw pictures of the sky).

Opening Curiosity Activity: Help Needed!

SUPPLIES: blindfolds, disposable cups (at least 20), timer

Have you ever had a mission that seemed difficult to complete on your own? Maybe you've had a time when you were supposed to clean up a room that was really messy or build something really big. We have a mission to complete today. One of you can use these cups (point to the disposable cups) **to build a big tower. Seems easy, right?** Allow the kids time to respond. **But the person building it must do it all while blindfolded. Now, do you think this will be easy?** Allow the kids time to respond.

Choose one kid to be blindfolded and put a stack of disposable cups in front of her. Set a timer for one minute and encourage the other kids to cheer for the kid as she builds. Challenge her to build the tallest tower that she can build. If you see that she's struggling, pause the game.

Do you think it would be easier to build this wall with some help? Allow the builder to answer. **Let's test it out and see if a helper will make this task easier.** Select a helper to assist the one building the tower. The helper won't be blindfolded and can help using his hands and voice.

Was it easier with help? What if you had more help? Choose a couple of other kids to help. Then let someone else have a turn building and helping, until the group builds a tower. **It was easier to complete the mission with a helper!**

We're going to learn today about when Jesus gave His followers a big mission, or job, kind of like building this wall while blindfolded. But thankfully, His followers don't have to complete the mission alone. We'll learn that Jesus promised to send us a helper. We'll learn all about it today in God's big story. God gives us the Holy Spirit to help us.

Let the kids play with and stack cups and practice helping one another.

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible, scissors (prep only)

RESOURCES: Verse Picture Cards (1/SG)

WORD OF WONDER

The Holy Spirit gives us power.

—from Acts 1:8

Before kids arrive, print the Verse Picture Cards and cut out each card. Hide the cards around the room.

Display the Word of Wonder Slide. **Our Word of Wonder for the Power of the Spirit series is from Acts 1:8. Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together.**

In the Power of the Spirit series, we're learning about the Holy Spirit. We'll hear incredible stories written in the Bible to show how the Holy Spirit gives us power. Let's play a game to help us remember that!

There are three cards hidden around the room. On each card is a picture that will help us remember the Word of Wonder for this series. Let's see if you can find the three cards.

Encourage the kids to find the cards and bring them back to the front.

What pictures do you see? Allow kids time to respond. **A bird, a pair of hands, and a person flexing muscles. This bird is a dove, which represents the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16).**

The hands represent us receiving (or getting) something. What do we get from the Holy Spirit?

Allow the kids to respond.

Yes! We get power. The muscles represent power.

Let's read this together. Hold up each card as you say that part of the verse.

The Holy Spirit (hold up card 1) **gives us** (hold up card 2) **power** (hold up card 3). Repeat several times for the kids to memorize the verse. Try letting them say the verse without the picture cards. Then invite the kids to hold up the cards while you all say the verse together.

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **THE HOLY SPIRIT**—Move arms up and in a circle in front of your body, palms facing out.
- **GIVES US**—Point to yourself.
- **POWER.**—Flex your arm muscles.
- **FROM ACTS 1:8**—Hold your hands together as if opening a book.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **Who gives us power?** (God; the Holy Spirit)
- **What special job or mission will God help us do that we learned about today?** (share His story with others)



Craft: Wind Chimes // Read the Story

SUPPLIES: yarn or string (6 pieces per kid, varying lengths), scissors (prep only), twigs or craft sticks (1 per kid), beads (handful for each kid), bowls (1 per small group of kids), electric or portable battery-powered fan

RESOURCES: [Bible Story Picture \(1/SF\)](#), music from the [Power of the Spirit Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, cut six pieces of yarn or string for each kid, of varying lengths. Tie the pieces of yarn or string to a twig or craft stick from one end of the twig to the other. This string will allow the wind chime to hang. Place the beads in bowls.

We're going to make wind chimes. You'll put beads on each piece of yarn. When you get the beads on the yarn, a leader will tie the end so you don't lose any beads. Invite the kids to put beads on their yarn, then help them tie the yarn so the beads stay on.

We can't see the Holy Spirit, kind of like we can't see the wind. But we can feel the wind. We can see things blowing in the wind (like leaves or wind chimes!). We can see the Holy Spirit working in our lives and helping us. We can feel the Holy Spirit's power inside of us. We can remember that even though we can't see the Holy Spirit, we can trust that the Holy Spirit is with us when we follow Jesus. You can take your wind chime home and hang it outside, where it can blow in the wind. When it does, may it remind you of the power of the Holy Spirit that is real and powerful!

Prepare an electric or portable battery-powered fan so it's ready to turn on when the kids finish their wind chime .

Hold up an example of what they will be making and show how the fan moves the strings, so the beads make noise. You can play music from the [Power of the Spirit Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#) while kids are working on their wind chimes.

After the kids make their own wind chimes, show them how the wind can blow the pieces of string and beads, causing them to make noise when they knock into each other.



Leader Tip: Watch your kids closely to ensure beads are used safely.

While kids are creating, read this God's Big Story Script from Matthew 28:16–20 and Acts 1:1–11: Today's story comes from the Bible and happens after Jesus came back to life. Jesus spent time with His friends, the disciples, and gave them an important mission. He told them to go and tell others about Him. Then something amazing happened as Jesus went up into heaven.

Jesus met with His disciples on a mountain and told them that He has all power. He told them to go and tell people everywhere about Him and His love.

Say this with me: Tell everyone about Jesus. Tell everyone about Jesus.

Jesus told His friends they would not be alone. He promised to send them a Helper, the Holy Spirit, to be with them and help them.

Say this with me: Jesus sends the Holy Spirit. *Jesus sends the Holy Spirit.*

Then something amazing happened. Jesus went up into the sky and disappeared into the clouds, going back to heaven. His friends watched and wondered what would happen next.

But they remembered His promise. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to help His people.

Say this with me: The Holy Spirit helps me. *The Holy Spirit helps me.*

Jesus' friends had a big job, but they were not alone! And we are not alone either. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to guide us and help us!

Circle Time: Bop the Balloon

SUPPLIES: white balloon (inflated), permanent marker

RESOURCES: upbeat music from the [Power of the Spirit Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#)

Allergy Caution: Be aware of any latex allergies among your kids and volunteers before doing this activity!

Ahead of time, use a permanent marker to write “Jesus” on the balloon.

In today's story, we learned about when Jesus went up to heaven. The word for that is ascends. Can you say that? Pause to allow the kids to respond. **Jesus went to heaven, which is where He is now. But He didn't leave us alone. Who did He send to be our helper?** Allow the kids to respond. **He sent the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to everyone who believes in Jesus. The Holy Spirit helps people who trust in Jesus to become His disciples and share Jesus' message just like the very first disciples did.**

To help us remember this, we're going to bop the Jesus balloon up to the pretend sky while we think about how Jesus ascended and sent the Holy Spirit to help us. You'll bop the balloon up around the circle while the music plays. When the music stops, whoever is the last person to touch the balloon will answer a question.

Play upbeat music from the [Power of the Spirit Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#) as the kids bop the white balloon around the circle and answer questions when you pause the music.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **What was the special mission or job Jesus gave His followers before He went to heaven?** *(tell everyone about Jesus all over the world)*
- **How did Jesus say He would help His followers with this mission?** *(by sending the Holy Spirit)*
- **Who were the disciples told to share the story of Jesus with?** *(everyone in the world)*

- **How do you think the Holy Spirit helps us?** (If the kids need help, offer ideas such as: The Holy Spirit helps us share God’s message with others; the Holy Spirit gives us power and courage; the Holy Spirit lives in us and helps us obey God.)
- **Who is someone you can tell about Jesus?**
- **Who has shared about Jesus with you?**

Leader Tip: Open-ended questions can be challenging for some kids. Offer two answer choices to help them understand and engage. For example, you might ask, “Who did Jesus promise to send as a helper to His followers: the Holy Spirit or Moses?”

God knows you and loves you, and He wants you to talk to Him and tell Him everything. You can tell Him what makes you happy, what makes you angry, and ask Him for help if you need His help in any area of your life. You can tell God anything. Let’s talk to God.

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That’s OK! Encourage them to pray silently and thank God for sending the Holy Spirit for us. God hears all our prayers!

Declaring God’s Wonder

Show the Early Childhood Declaration Slide and encourage the kids to stand and say the statements and do the motions with you.

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up and then to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from above, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

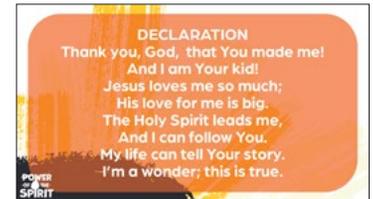
March in place like you’re following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I’m a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate (“praise hands”).



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You for giving us this time to be together and meet with You. Thank You for giving us Your Word, the Bible, so we can learn about You. Help us hear from You today. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Today we'll learn about when Jesus gave a mission to all of His followers. But He didn't leave us alone. He sent the greatest helper. Let's sing about our mission to go and tell all of the world about Jesus!

Play songs Take You at Your Word, Happy Day and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible;

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible, and what do I see? *(Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.)*

God's big story, waiting for me! *(Point to yourself.)*

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Tell them today's story comes from the Bible. Open a Bible and show them where the story is found in Matthew and Acts.

Let's hear part of God's big story, which comes from the books of Matthew and Acts in the Bible, which are in the New Testament.

Read the Experience It Script on the following page.

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: posterboard, scissors (prep only), colored inflated balloons (6–8), white inflated balloon (3), permanent marker, small table or box to represent a mountain, tape, string or twine

Allergy Caution: Be aware of any latex allergies among your kids and volunteers before doing this activity!

Before the kids arrive, cut out a large cloud from the posterboard. Inflate all the balloons. Use a permanent marker to draw smiley faces on the balloons. You could also cut out paper “feet” and tape them to the bottom of the balloon to make miniature “balloon people.” Use string or twine and tape to hang the cloud from the ceiling. You could also have a volunteer hold it up high during the telling of the story. Write “Jesus” on one of the white balloons. Set the other two white balloons out of sight. Set the colored balloons off to the side near your teaching area.



As you tell the story, the colorful balloons will represent the disciples, the white balloon with “Jesus” written on it will represent Jesus, and the other two white balloons will represent the angels.

Leader Tip: To add some pizzazz to your telling of this story, a helium-filled balloon can represent Jesus. Place a large metal washer or weight at the bottom of the string. When you read about Jesus ascending, remove the weight and release the balloon.

Leader Tip: To keep the story props simple, you can only use one helium-inflated balloon and release it when you tell the story of Jesus ascending. Instead of helium, you can also do a fun experiment during this part of the story. Add 4 ounces of vinegar to an empty water bottle and use a funnel to add 2 tablespoons of baking soda to an un-inflated balloon. Carefully place the mouth of the balloon over the water bottle opening (without spilling baking soda into the bottle). When you talk about Jesus ascending, let a kid help hold the balloon up so the baking soda falls into the bottle and mixes with the vinegar. The balloon will “rise up” and inflate on its own.

Jesus died and came back to life. Hold up the Jesus balloon; then place it on the ground. **Then He went to see His disciples, or His followers. It was true! Jesus was really alive! He hung out with them. Jesus ate with His disciples and talked with them. They touched Him. It was amazing.** Show the colorful balloons, which represent the disciples. Show the white balloon that represents Jesus.

His disciples went with Jesus to a mountain. Move the Jesus balloon and other balloons around so they’re walking and talking. You can use a small table or box to represent a mountain and make the balloons go up on it.

On the mountain, Jesus told His disciples about a special mission: Their mission was to tell people all about Jesus. To tell people about the things Jesus taught and the miracles He did. The most important thing to tell everyone is how Jesus died and came back to life so people can be close with God. The disciples would invite others to follow Jesus too. Jesus told the disciples to share His message all over the world. This is known as The Great Commission.

Leader Tip: Part of The Great Commission is sharing God’s message with all people, and the other part is baptizing believers. You can explain to kids that baptism symbolizes cleansing people with water to show that they’re turning from their old ways and God is washing them clean of their sin.

That sounds like a big mission! But Jesus didn’t expect His disciples to do this mission without special help. He promised to send the Holy Spirit to help them. Like Jesus and the Father, the Holy Spirit is God. The Holy Spirit—God’s powerful, wise, and loving presence—would come be with the disciples and give them power to share Jesus’ message with everyone. Jesus wanted them to know that God was going to still be with them even when His body was not on earth.

Jesus told the disciples to share His message with the entire world. Then Jesus started to go up into the sky until He disappeared behind the clouds. The word for what happened when Jesus went up into the sky is ascend. Move the white Jesus balloon so it rises up toward the cloud. **Suddenly, two angels dressed in white were with the disciples.** Bring out the two white balloons and move them toward the colorful balloons. **They told the disciples to stop looking up into the clouds. The angels said, “Just like Jesus went into heaven, one day He will come back in the same way.” Then the disciples went back to Jerusalem. They waited there for the Holy Spirit to come, like Jesus promised.**

The disciples knew that they needed the Spirit’s power to complete the mission Jesus gave them. But Jesus didn’t promise to give the Spirit only to the disciples. Instead, the Holy Spirit comes to everyone who believes in Jesus. The Holy Spirit helps people who trust in Jesus to become His disciples and share Jesus’ message just like the very fi st disciples did. Even today, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit.

You may want to save one of the white balloons to use in Circle Time.

Make It Inclusive: Some kids are very sensitive to loud noises like balloons popping and may feel anxious with this balloon activity. Consider announcing that the balloons will not be popped to help ease any of their concerns or worries. Noise-canceling headphones could be provided for those with more significant anxiety about loud sounds.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Ask the following question to help kids connect the Wonder Truth to God’s big story:

Our Wonder Truth today is JESUS SENDS THE HOLY SPIRIT. Where did you see our Wonder Truth happen in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

We see the Holy Spirit working all throughout the Bible! In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit empowered people like Joseph, Moses, David, and Isaiah to give God’s messages. Then in the New Testament, Jesus promised that the same Spirit will be with His followers as they share His story. When we follow Jesus, the same Holy Spirit is with us and in us!

Prayer and Blessing

After finishing the story, pray with them and thank God for sending the Holy Spirit to help us.

God, thank You for sending the Holy Spirit to help us. Help us to be bold as we go and tell others about You and Your love for us. We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to all who believe in Him and that includes us! Through the Holy Spirit, God is always with you and in you. May you walk in step with the Holy Spirit this week and always, receiving His help and power to share God's love!

Closing Game: Pop the Bubbles

SUPPLIES: bubble machine or bubble wand, balloons (optional)

Today we learned that Jesus went up into the clouds to heaven. Have you ever played with bubbles? Allow the kids to respond. Bubbles can float up toward the sky like Jesus did when He went to heaven.

We're going to play a game of popping bubbles. I'll call out a body part you'll use to pop the bubbles. Don't let any bubbles hit the floor !

Call out the following body parts while blowing bubbles (or use a bubble machine):

- thumb
- pointer (index) finger
- pinky finger
- nose
- head
- elbow
- knee
- foot

If you don't have bubbles, you can have the kids pop balloons instead.

Remember, Jesus didn't just leave us alone! He sent the Holy Spirit to be with us and help us!

Make It Inclusive: For kids who need extra help or visual cues, print pictures of each body part listed below and let kids pull out a picture and point to that body part.

VIEW THE GOD'S BIG STORY VIDEO

While you wait for parents to arrive, bring out the Play Stations and play the God's Big Story video for review.

