

LESSON 1

JESUS GIVES THE GREAT COMMISSION AND ASCENDS

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Promises to Send 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: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will tell people about me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria. And you will even tell other people about me from one end of the earth to the other. —Acts 1:8

- PRESERVICE
 - Interactive Game: Four Elbows!
 - STEM Activity: Mission Impossible
- Welcome Question: What is a task you needed help to complete?
- SMALL GROUP
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: Take You at Your Word, You Have Overcome
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Responding in Worship: Holy Forever
- Blessing Your Kids



INVITATION

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

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SCRIPTURE: Matthew 28; Acts 1

WORD OF WONDER: 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.

Large Group

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Promises to Send the Holy Spirit
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As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Be extra intentional about introducing yourself to new parents and kids.

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN (2min OR 30sec) Start a countdown to begin game 10 minutes prior to service start)

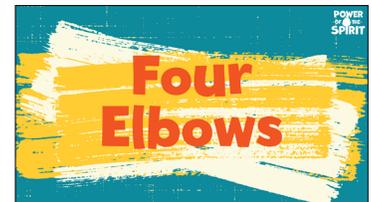
OPTION 1: Interactive Game: Four Elbows!

SUPPLIES: scissors (prep only), cardstock

RESOURCES: Four Elbows Game Cards **By Request

Ahead of time, print the Four Elbows Game Cards onto cardstock and cut them out. Shuffle and stack the cards.

Display the Four Elbows Slide and gather the kids. **Let's play a game today that's impossible to play by ourselves! It's called Four Elbows.** Hold up the stack of Four Elbows Game Cards. **On each of these cards is a number and a body part. I'll pull a card and read it out loud, and you'll try as quickly as possible to form a group with other people that includes that number of that specific body part. For example, how many elbows do you have?** Pause for kids to respond. **So, if a card says, "Four Elbows," how many people will be in a group?** Pause again. **Yes, a group of two people have four elbows!** Begin the game by pulling a Four Elbows Game Card, reading it aloud, and giving kids time to organize themselves into groups. If some kids aren't able to form the correct size group, that's OK—everyone can keep playing! (The numbers for each round won't always work out evenly.) Play as time allows or until all 12 cards are used.

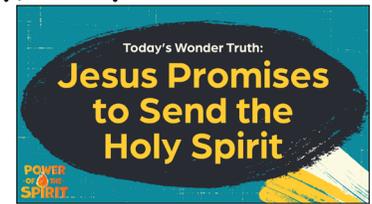


| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Get into a group with ... 4 elbows! <small>(This is two people)</small> | Get into a group with ... 5 noses! <small>(This is four people)</small> | Get into a group with ... 20 toes! <small>(This is two people)</small> |
| Get into a group with ... 6 heads! <small>(This is six people)</small> | Get into a group with ... 6 knees! <small>(This is four people)</small> | Get into a group with ... 40 fingers! <small>(This is four people)</small> |
| Get into a group with ... 6 ears! <small>(This is three people)</small> | Get into a group with ... 8 eyes! <small>(This is four people)</small> | Get into a group with ... 4 ankles! <small>(This is two people)</small> |
| Get into a group with ... 4 wrists! <small>(This is two people)</small> | Get into a group with ... 12 thumbs! <small>(This is six people)</small> | Get into a group with ... 4 mouths! <small>(This is four people)</small> |
| Wonder Ink LESSON 1 FOUR ELBOWS GAME CARDS ELEMENTARY | | |

Leader Tip: For Younger Kids. On each game card is a sentence that states how many people will be in that group. For example, the card that states, “4 ankles” also includes the sentence, “This is two people.” If you have younger kids in your group, be sure to read all the words on the card.

Make It Inclusive: If there are kids in your ministry with limb differences, plan to play an alternative game with everyone, such as one from the Power of the Spirit series games resource.

Do you think you could have played Four Elbows by yourself? Invite responses. You're right! There's simply no way any of us could have played this game alone! Today in God's big story, we'll learn about a very difficult mission Jesus gave His followers before He went back up to heaven. There's no way Jesus' followers, including us, could do it on their own! Thankfully, Jesus promised to send someone to help! Display the Commission Wonder Truth Slide. Today's Wonder Truth is **JESUS PROMISES TO SEND THE HOLY SPIRIT. The Holy Spirit is God, and He lives inside each of us who follow Jesus, giving us power to do things that seem impossible!**



OPTION 2 STEM Activity: Mission Impossible

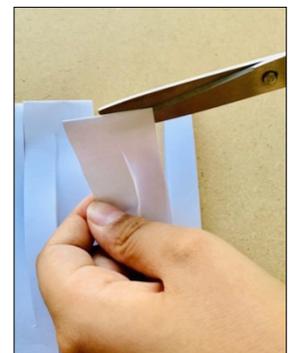
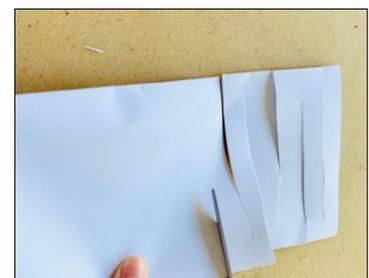
SUPPLIES: paper (1 per kid, plus 2), scissors (prep only), kid-safe scissors (1 per kid)

RESOURCES: [Mission Impossible Sheet \(1 per kid, plus 1\)](#) ****By Request** [Impossible Paper Trick Tutorial Video](#) (optional)

Ahead of time, print copies of the Mission Impossible Sheet for each kid plus one. Start by following the directions on the sheet to cut a large paper hoop. Then practice cutting the same pattern on a plain sheet of paper, using the sheet, photos on this page, and these instructions for guidance:

1. Fold your piece of paper in half lengthwise. Starting at the folded side, cut about an inch from the top almost all the way over to the open side, but leaving about a one-inch gap.
2. Open the paper and cut on the middle fold line, all the way from one slit to the other slit, so the inside is open. Then fold it back like it was.
3. Alternate cutting on both sides of the paper (open side, folded side), cutting one inch from the end all the way along the length of the paper. See photos for an example of how to cut the paper.

You can also watch this [video](#) tutorial to see how to cut the paper. You'll want to know exactly where to cut and where to stop so that you can cut it seamlessly while you talk to the kids. During this activity, you'll share a story about a time when God helped you do something you felt was impossible without Him, so prayerfully prepare what you might share.



You might share about stepping out of your comfort zone to do something challenging or forgiving someone who hurt you. Be honest but discerning in what you share, keeping details age appropriate.

Display the **Mission Impossible Slide** and gather the kids together. Hold up a plain sheet of paper. **Do you think you can cut a hole in this sheet of paper in a way that would allow a person to walk through it without breaking the paper?** Pause for kids to respond. **It seems like an impossible task!** Pass out sheets of paper and kid-safe scissors. Then let the kids try cutting a hole in their papers big enough for a person to walk through, without ripping the paper. They can take turns coming up to the front and holding their papers while other kids try to walk through. This task may become frustrating for some kids, so keep your tone light and fun. Assure kids that this activity is supposed to feel impossible!

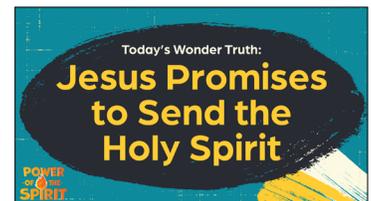


Make It Inclusive: Kids with dexterity challenges might struggle to make small, precise cuts. Precut several copies of the Mission Impossible Diagram to give to any kids who struggle.

When it seems kids have concluded that the task is impossible, you can begin to cut your paper according to the Mission Impossible Diagram and the provided instructions while you talk to the kids about a time God helped you do something that would have been impossible to do on your own.

Give each kid a Mission Impossible Sheet. If time allows, invite them to follow the directions to cut out a large paper hoop. If time is limited, encourage kids to take the sheets home and try the cutting activity with family or friends.

Cutting one sheet of paper in a way that would allow someone to walk through it seemed pretty impossible until I showed you how it's done. There are simply some things that we cannot do alone! Today in God's big story, we'll learn about a very difficult mission Jesus gave His followers before He went back up to heaven. There's no way Jesus' followers, including us, could do it on their own! Thankfully, Jesus promised to send someone to help! Display the Commission Wonder Truth Slide. Today's Wonder Truth is **JESUS PROMISES TO SEND THE HOLY SPIRIT. The Holy Spirit is God, and He lives inside each of us who follows Jesus, giving us power to do things that seem impossible!**



Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, poster board OR , whiteboard, dry-erase markers (if needed)

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At service start time, draw kids' attention to the Welcome Question.

Invite kids to write answers on the poster board or whiteboard.

There are some things in life that are too difficult to do alone!

Today in God's big story, we'll learn about Jesus' plan for helping His followers complete a really big, really hard mission! But first, it's time for small group!



Small Group

Introduce small group time. While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! We are going to pray as we prepare our hearts to worship God!"

Declaring God's Wonder

Display the **Commission Declaration Slide**. Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

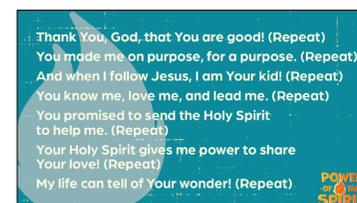
And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You promised to send the Holy Spirit to help me. (Kids repeat.)

Your Holy Spirit gives me power to share Your love! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Prayer of Invitation

Lead kids in a prayer of invitation before entering into worship and God's big story: **God, thank You for each person in this room. Thank You for Your promise to send the Holy Spirit as a helper. Thank You that through Your Spirit, You are here with us! Help us hear You today. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

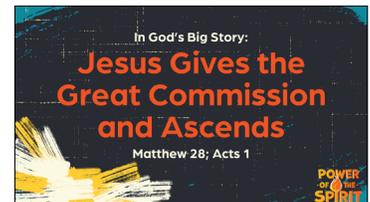
Today we'll hear about how Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to be a helper to all who follow Jesus. Let's praise and thank God for His presence!

Play songs from [Take You at Your Word](#), [You Have Overcome](#) and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

Display the [Commission Title Slide](#).

Today we are learning about the mission Jesus gave His followers and the promise that came with it. As you watch, think about why Jesus did not leave His disciples to do this on their own and how the Holy Spirit changes what they are able to do.



LESSON 1 JESUS GIVES THE GREAT COMMISSION AND ASCENDS

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

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

Allergy Caution: Be aware of any latex allergies or sensitivities before doing this activity.

Before kids arrive, cut out a large cloud from the posterboard. Inflate all of the balloons. With string or twine, hang the cloud from the ceiling. (Alternatively, you can have a volunteer hold it up high during the telling of the story.) Set the small table or box under the cloud. Write Jesus on one of the white balloons. Set the other two white balloons out of sight. Place the colorful 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 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, use a white helium balloon to represent Jesus and attach a metal washer or weight to the bottom of the string. When it's time for Jesus to ascend, remove the weight and release the balloon.

After Jesus was killed by the Romans, God brought Him back to life. Hold up the Jesus balloon; then place it on the ground. **Jesus then appeared to His disciples and proved to them He really was alive. He ate food with them and let them touch Him.** Bring out colorful balloons to sit around the Jesus balloon on the ground. **His disciples knew then for sure that Jesus wasn't a ghost or a dream.**

The disciples went to a mountain in the region called Galilee, where Jesus had told them to go. Move the Jesus balloon and other balloons onto a small table/box positioned under the cloud. **There on the mountain, Jesus told His disciples that they would have a special mission to complete—to tell people all about Jesus and the things He taught and the miracles that He did. Most importantly, they would tell everyone how Jesus died and came back to life so that every person could have a relationship with God. They would invite others to become Jesus' disciples too, and they would baptize them—cleansing them with water as a symbol of turning from their old ways and God washing them clean of sin. Jesus told them to carry this message all over the world.**

Stand, hands on hips. **Whew! That's quite a mission! Especially in a time with no air travel, Internet, or phones! Jesus did not expect His disciples to complete this mission all by themselves. Instead, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to help them. Like Jesus and the Father, the Holy Spirit is also God, and so Jesus was promising that God would still be with them even when Jesus was no longer physically on earth. The Holy Spirit—God's powerful, wise, and loving presence—would come and fill the disciples and give them power to share Jesus' message with everyone.**

Crouch behind balloons, collecting the regular balloons. **But Jesus' mission confused the disciples. They expected God to free the people of Israel from the Roman Empire. They believed God's promise that Jesus, the Messiah, would one day rule the whole world. But they didn't understand why Jesus wasn't ruling already and why Israel wasn't free yet. They asked Him, "Lord, are you going to make Israel a free kingdom now?"**

Earlier Jesus had told His disciples that only God the Father knows exactly when Jesus will come back and rule the world (Matthew 24:36). Instead of worrying about it, Jesus wanted the disciples to focus on taking the message about Jesus to the entire world. "You should not be concerned about times or dates," Jesus told them. "The Father has set them by his own authority" (Acts 1:7). Jesus promised the disciples again that the Holy Spirit would come to them and help them complete their mission.

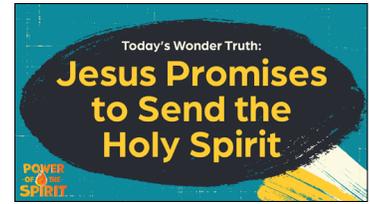
Suddenly, before their eyes, (take the Jesus balloon and "float" it up to be behind the cloud) **Jesus started to rise off the ground and into the sky until He disappeared behind the clouds. Then two angels dressed in white clothing appeared in human form.** Pull the two white balloons from behind the small table or box. **The angels told the disciples to stop staring up into the clouds. They said, "Just like Jesus went up to heaven, one day He will come back down in the same way."** Push the colorful balloons back to the ground. **Then the disciples returned to Jerusalem. They waited there for Jesus to fulfill His promise to send the Holy Spirit.**

Pick up a balloon and sit in front of the kids, gently tossing the balloon in your hands. **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 gathered that day. Instead, the Holy Spirit comes to everyone who believes in Him. The Holy Spirit makes it possible for anyone who trusts in Jesus to become His disciples and share Jesus' message just like the very first disciples did.** Reach out as though pointing to each kid with the balloon. **Even today, Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit.**

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

Display the Commission Wonder Truth Slide. Our Wonder Truth today is **JESUS PROMISES TO SEND THE HOLY SPIRIT**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in action in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.



The Holy Spirit has been active throughout history! In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit empowered people like Joseph, Moses, David, and Isaiah to represent God. Then in the New Testament, Jesus promised that the same Spirit will be with His followers as they spread the good news of Jesus. When we follow Jesus, the same Holy Spirit is with us and in us!

In Awe of God's Wonder

Spend a few moments allowing kids to think about the wonder of God's story.

Close your eyes and imagine being on the mountain with Jesus when He was lifted up into heaven. What do you think is most amazing about that scene? Give kids time to imagine and share freely.

What amazes you most about the Holy Spirit? What about the Holy Spirit causes you to wonder? Allow kids time to think quietly or share.

Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson. ***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. See the "Worship Posture Tutorial" on the RBKids Resource Page.



WORSHIP VIDEO: WORTHY OF IT ALL

Blessing Your Kids

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!