

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

- Welcome Question: What is a task you needed help to complete?
- Curiosity Questions
- God's Big Story
- Word of Wonder Activity
- Discussion Questions for Elementary Kids and Preteens
- Small Group Prayer Time
- LARGE GROUP
- Elementary Responding in Worship: Wind Chimes
- Preteen Responding in Worship: Mountain Mural
- Blessing Your Kids



INVITATION

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Promises to Send the Holy Spirit

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.

LESSON 1 ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN

Small 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

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 28; Acts 1

WORD OF WONDER: Acts 1:8

Pre-Service Connection (15-20 min)

RESOURCES: whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils, board games or games

[Games & Activities Guide](#)

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have activities ready to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them! Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

As kids arrive ...

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Use the Welcome Question and the following "I'm Curious" questions to engage kids. Say "I'm curious.." before each question and give kids an chance to think before answering each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

Consider having a whiteboard or poster for kids to write or draw answers to any of the questions:

- Do you think it's easier to accomplish big tasks by yourself or with helpers? Why?
- Who depends on your help? How do you help them?



Small Group Begins

After the Opening Activity or game, Large Group Leader will begin small group time by reading the Welcome Question aloud and inviting everyone to open their Bibles and begin.

Word of Wonder Activity

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 (NIRV)

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid), cardstock (1 per group), scissors (prep only), painter’s or masking tape, soft-textured ball (1 per small group)

RESOURCES: [Word of Wonder Wall Sheets \(1 set per small group\)](#), [Elementary Word of Wonder Video](#) (optional)

Ahead of time, print a set of the Word of Wonder Wall Sheets NIRV onto cardstock for each small group. Cut the pages in half along the cut lines. Then tape each set to the wall at approximately the kids’ height. For groups with younger kids, tape the sheets in verse order. For groups with older kids, tape them in random order to make the activity more challenging. Each small group should have its own set of wall sheets.



Our Word of Wonder for the Power of the Spirit series talks about how the Holy Spirit gives us power to share about Jesus. Let’s say the verse together. Open your Bible to Acts 1:8. Introduce kids to Acts 1:8 by reading it several times together.

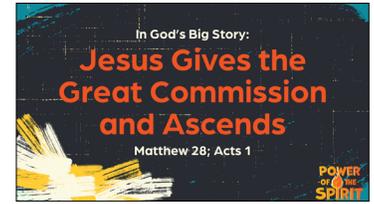
Invite kids to line up facing the wall where the Word of Wonder Wall Sheets are taped. The first person in line will find the first words of the verse and toss a ball at that sheet as everyone reads the words together. They will continue through the line, with each person tossing the ball at the next part of the verse and everyone in the group reading that part of the verse together. Play several rounds, challenging kids to go faster each time.

Leader Tip: To make this activity more challenging for older kids, use a stopwatch to time them going through the verse. Then see if they can work together to beat their previous time. For younger kids, tape the sheets in verse order and go through the verse slowly.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid), sticky notes (2 per kid, optional)

Let kids know there are two Bible passages today, both from the New Testament. If you have sticky notes, give each kid two. Invite them to turn to Matthew 28 and Acts 1 and keep a finger (or place a sticky note) at each place. Encourage older kids to help younger kids find the two passages.



Let's start by reading part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we'll watch and experience more of the story!

Read Matthew 28:16–20 aloud (or invite a confident reader to do so) while everyone follows along. Next, invite kids to turn to Acts 1:1–11 and to follow along as you read aloud.

Elementary Questions

- **What was the special mission, or task, Jesus gave the disciples before He went to heaven?** (to tell people about Jesus, His love for them, and that He died and rose again so that every person can have a relationship with God forever)
- **That's a big mission! Who did Jesus promise to send as a helper to His followers?** (the Holy Spirit)
- **Who is the Holy Spirit?** (The Holy Spirit is God—our powerful, wise, and loving helper.)
- **Who does God give the Holy Spirit to?** (every person who follows Jesus, including us)
- **How does the Holy Spirit help people today?** (Possible answers: The Holy Spirit helps us understand what Jesus taught; reminds us that Jesus loves us; helps us know what to say to help others; helps us to be kind, loving, joyful, etc.; helps us to be brave.)
- **How has the Holy Spirit helped you?**

God gives the Holy Spirit to every Jesus-follower! That means that when we follow Jesus, we have the Holy Spirit—who is God—in us and with us. The Holy Spirit helps us to do the mission Jesus gave His followers: to tell the whole world about Jesus and His amazing love—starting with our friends, family, and neighbors who don't know Him. Let's pray for people in our lives now!

Make It Inclusive: Open-ended questions can be challenging for kids who are neurodivergent. Offering kids two answer choices can help them understand the question and engage! For example, you might ask, “Who did Jesus promise to send as a helper to His followers: the Holy Spirit or Moses?”

Preteen Questions

- **What was the special mission, or task, that Jesus gave to His disciples before He went to heaven?** (to tell people about Jesus, His love for them, and that He died and rose again so that every person can have a relationship with God forever)
- **How did Jesus say He would help the disciples with this mission?** (Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to help them.)
- **How would you explain who the Holy Spirit is to a friend?** (Possible answers: The Holy Spirit is God—our powerful, wise, and loving helper. The Holy Spirit is one part of the Trinity—three persons who are all one true God: the Father, the Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God’s presence, given to every Jesus-follower.)
- **Do you think you would know Jesus and His love for you if the disciples hadn’t told people everywhere about Jesus? Why or why not?**
- **How does the Holy Spirit help people today?** (Possible answers: The Holy Spirit helps us understand what Jesus taught; reminds us that Jesus loves us; helps us know what to say to help others; helps us to be kind, loving, joyful, etc.; helps us to be brave.)
- **How can the Holy Spirit help you tell others about Jesus and share His love?**
- **Jesus told the disciples to tell others about Him in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria** (see Acts 1:8). **These places were like the disciples’ neighborhood, town, and country. Who in your neighborhood, town, and country needs to know about Jesus?**

God gives the Holy Spirit to every Jesus-follower! That means that when we follow Jesus, we have the Holy Spirit—who is God—in us and with us. The Holy Spirit helps us to do the mission Jesus gave His followers: to tell the whole world about Jesus and His amazing love—starting with our friends, family, and neighbors who don’t know Him. Let’s pray for people in our lives now!

Small Group Prayer Time

Ask kids to share prayer requests and praises, focusing on those in their circles who don’t know Jesus and His love for them. Encourage them all to think of at least one friend, family member, or neighbor who is not a Jesus-follower who they would like to pray for. Then spend time praying for each person mentioned.

Elementary Responding in Worship: Wind Chimes

SUPPLIES: scissors (prep only), yarn or string (6 strands per kid, varying lengths between 3 and 10 inches), beads (multiple colors), bowls (several), electric fan, twigs or craft sticks (1 per kid), fine-tipped permanent marker (optional), colorful ribbon (optional), craft bells (optional)

RESOURCES: “Holy Spirit” from the [Power of the Spirit Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, cut six strands of yarn or string for each kid, of varying lengths between three and 10 inches. Pour beads into several bowls. Consider creating a sample wind chime to show kids. Plug in an electric fan, so it is ready to turn on when the kids finish their wind chime creations. Consider writing “Holy Spirit” across each craft stick. If using colorful ribbon, cut strands of various lengths.

Leader Tip: Consider tying knots at the end of all the pieces of string ahead of time to save time during this activity.

Gather the kids together and display the Wind Chimes Slide. **We learned in God’s big story today that Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to His disciples long ago, and He promises to send the Holy Spirit to each of us who follows Him! What do you know about the Holy Spirit?** Allow kids to share what they know freely! If needed, remind them that the Holy Spirit is God—our powerful, wise, and loving helper. The Holy Spirit is one part of the Trinity—three persons who are all one true God: the Father, the Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God’s presence, given to every Jesus-follower.

The Bible uses the word picture of wind to describe the Holy Spirit. How do you think the Holy Spirit is like wind? Again, invite kids to share freely. **Yes! We can’t see the Holy Spirit, kind of like how we can’t see the wind. But sometimes we can sense that the Holy Spirit is with us, like we can feel the wind. Let’s make wind chimes to help us remember that Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to His followers, including us, to help them complete God’s mission—to tell others about Jesus and His love!**

Hand out six strands of string and a twig or craft stick to each kid. Be sure there is a bowl of beads within reach of each kid. Walk kids through these steps:

1. Tie knots at the bottom of five pieces of string. Invite other leaders to help kids who need assistance tying knots.
2. String beads onto the five strings that are knotted at the bottom. Encourage kids to choose bead colors that remind them of the Holy Spirit.
3. Tie the loose end of each string to the twig or craft stick. The strings should be tied close enough to each other that the beads on each string knock against the others when the wind blows them. If you have craft bells or colorful ribbons, invite kids to attach them to their wind chimes to make them look and sound even more vibrant.
4. Tie the final string across the top from one end of the twig or stick to the other to be used as a hanger.



Play “Holy Spirit” from the [Power of the Spirit Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as kids work. When the kids are finished with their wind chimes, turn on the fan and show the kids how the wind makes the strings and beads knock into each other.

We can’t see the Holy Spirit, and we can’t see the wind, but just like we can see and hear the effects of the wind on these wind chimes, the power the Holy Spirit gives us shows us that the Spirit is real and is with us! Take yours home and hang it where it can blow in the wind, and when it does, remember that Jesus promises to give you the Holy Spirit!

Make It Inclusive: Kids who have difficulty with fine motor skills may need an assistant to help them with putting beads on the string.

Preteen Responding in Worship: Mountain Mural

SUPPLIES: butcher paper or posterboard (gray or brown, if possible), scissors (prep only), permanent marker, masking or painter’s tape, sticky notes (1 per kid), writing utensils

RESOURCES: “Holy Spirit” from the [Power of the Spirit Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, cut a large mountain out of butcher paper or posterboard. Across the top, write the Wonder Truth with a permanent marker: “Jesus Promises to Send the Holy Spirit.” Tape the paper mountain to the wall where kids can easily reach it.

We learned in God’s big story today that Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to His disciples long ago, and He promises to send the Holy Spirit to each of us who follows Him! What do you know about the Holy Spirit?

Allow kids to share what they know freely! If needed, remind them that the Holy Spirit is God—our powerful, wise, and loving helper. The Holy Spirit is one part of the Trinity—three persons who are all one true God: the Father, the Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God’s presence, given to every Jesus-follower.

The Holy Spirit helps us complete God’s mission—to tell others about Jesus and His love! When we follow Jesus and walk with Him, we have the Holy Spirit—who is God Himself—in us! That means we’re not alone when we share Jesus with others, and it means we’re not alone when we face other hard things. Sometimes sharing Jesus with others can feel like a really hard thing to do, and sometimes other situations in life can feel difficult, or even impossible! These things can seem like really tall mountains we have to climb.

Have you ever seen a really tall mountain? Have you ever climbed a really tall mountain? Invite kids to respond. **Because Jesus promises the Holy Spirit, God is with us and in us when we tell others about Him and when we face other difficult things! Let’s reflect on some of the hard things in our lives and remember that we don’t have to face them alone—Jesus promises the Holy Spirit!**

Give each kid a sticky note and a writing utensil. Invite them to think about something difficult in their lives. Maybe they have a friend or family member who doesn’t know Jesus, and sharing about Him with them feels hard or scary. Maybe they’re facing a difficult situation in school or at home, like a hard test or a disagreement with a friend. Encourage them to write or draw about it on a sticky note. Play “Holy Spirit” from the [Power of the Spirit Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as kids write and draw. When they’re finished, invite them to quietly approach the mountain on the wall and place their sticky note on it as a symbol that the Holy Spirit is with them.

Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit to each of us who follow Him! We don’t have to climb life’s mountains alone! Through the Holy Spirit, God is with us and in us as we tell others about Jesus. And He is with us and in us as we face all sorts of difficult things

Leader Tip: Some kids may be facing unimaginably difficult situations. If you suspect that a child may be experiencing trauma or abuse, share your concerns with your ministry leader immediately. Keep in mind that it's common for kids who have experienced trauma to either shut down and not engage with anyone (or with the activity) or to act out in ways that seem distracting. Remember that kids' actions communicate what they're feeling on the inside. Be present. Sit with them even when there isn't anything to say. Your presence and no-strings-attached love will give them a glimpse of how Jesus feels about them!