



On your marks

The story of the Ascension marks the transition between the gospels and the events of the Acts of the Apostles. It is the bridge between the resurrection and Pentecost. After the miracle of Easter morning, Jesus appeared for 40 days to a variety of people and in a variety of places. However, as he had already told them, there would come a time when he would have to go away, so that he could return to them in a new way. This return would mean that he could be with everyone, everywhere and at anytime. Jesus ascended to the right hand of God and then sent the Holy Spirit to fill and empower his followers.

Get set

The story is recorded in Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53 and Acts 1:3-11. Why not tell the story from [The Barnabas Family Bible](#) (BRF, 2014), page 206?

Go!

1 Introduce the story using some of the following words:

Today we're exploring the most amazing lift-off ever.
No rocket, no engine, no explosion and no vehicle were involved.
The person who lifted off went from earth to heaven; he went to the top job in the cosmos; he went from the lowest place to the highest.
He blazed a trail for us to follow and opened a path for a return visit.

2 It was 40 days since that amazing Easter morning.
Jesus had kept appearing to his friends:
on the road, in a room, one to one, one to 500 and by a lake.
He really was alive again.
But gradually they began to realise that it was time to say goodbye.
I wonder how they felt?

Explore some possible feelings with the group to create lines for use later, for example, 'What might they have asked?' Here are some ideas:
'Why can't you stay? Why not stay and be a king here on earth? Just where are you going? What will happen to us? How will we manage without you?'

3 Now walk with the group around your meeting area and come to a stop at a spot that you have decided will be *Olive Hill* (The Mount of Olives).

All sorts of things had happened here (Jesus used to pray here; he had cried here; he had stayed near here).
Act out 'climbing' to the top.



On the way they were still asking questions.

Ask the group to be the disciples, asking some of the questions you have already thought about before.

With an older group you could [hot seat](#) some as different disciples in order to discover more about what might have been on their minds.

4 Then Jesus said:

God has it all organised.

I will be back as a king but not the sort of king you are expecting.

I will be a king in people's hearts.

So here's what you must do.

(Now teach the following version of 'the Great Commission' with the suggested actions:)

Go (*point forward with one arm and finger outstretched*)

Into all the world (*describe a tiny circle with your outstretched finger and then make that circle bigger and bigger*)

And share the good news (*cup hands together and offer 'the contents' around to people left and right*)

With everybody, everywhere (*rapidly point to everyone in the whole group and beyond*)

And I will be with you.

Just wait, stop in Jerusalem until you receive the promise.

Then Jesus disappeared and two angels told them that Jesus would be back one day in the same mysterious way.

5 Now, bring the whole story together, using the following simple poem to the tune of 'Two little dickie birds sitting on a wall...' Maybe the children can learn the chorus?

Eleven amazed disciples, sitting very still,

Listening to Jesus, up on Olive Hill.

'Time to go', says Jesus and then a cloud came down.

'I'll send the power that you need, just wait inside the town.'

Fade away Jesus, walk home friends

Come soon Spirit, the promise that he sends.

Jesus was in one place, in Israel where he came

But soon he will be everywhere, with all who call his name.

Fade away Jesus, walk home friends

Come soon Spirit, the promise that he sends.

Jesus had begun his work and showed us what is true



He went... but comes with power again. Over to me and you.

*Fade away Jesus, walk home friends
Come soon Spirit, the promise that he sends.*