

A Good Shepherd Story of Jesus

Ascension

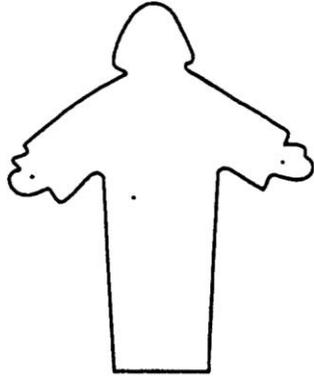
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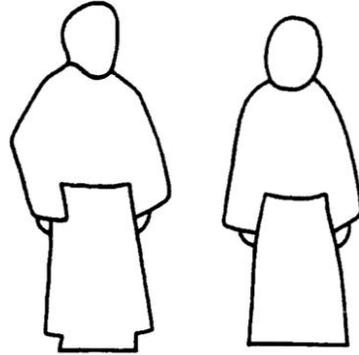
2nd Edition
(Good Shepherd, Inc. 1991, 1992
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ASCENSION MATERIALS

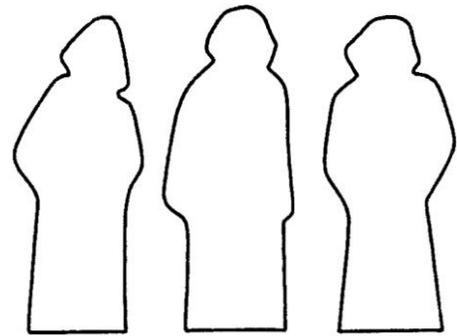
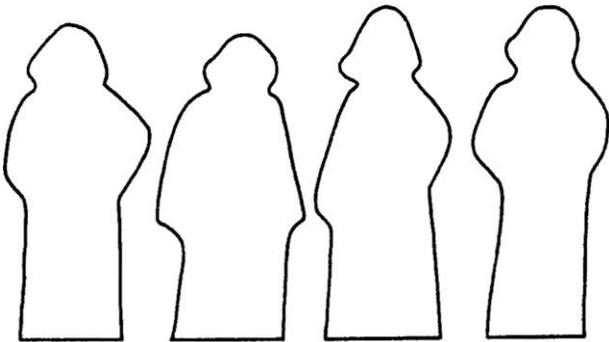
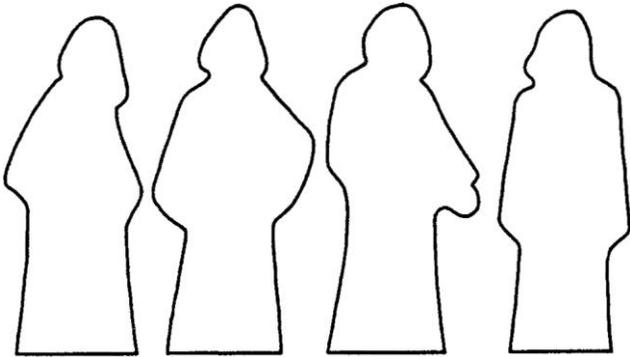
- medium wicker basket to hold:
 - 11 wooden disciple figures
 - wooden figure of Jesus with pierced hands and side
 - 2 wooden men figures in white robes.



Jesus



Men



Disciples

ACTIONS

After speaking, get the story from its shelf and carry it back to the circle. Sit down in your spot and place the basket in front of you.

Allow 10-15 seconds of silence as you reverently touch one or more of the wooden figures to center yourself and the children.

Place Jesus and the eleven disciples in front of you facing the children.

Point down as though indicating to stay in this place.

Touch one of the disciples.

Shake your head and smile.

Move your hand in a half circle in front of you, indicating the many places Jesus' story will be told.

Move the Jesus figure up slowly as high as you can.

Shake your head, still holding the Jesus figure high.

WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

All the words to this story are inside of me. Will you please make silence with me so I can find all the words to this story?

After Jesus rose from the dead he spent forty days with his disciples.

During that time he taught them and talked with them.

He told them to stay in Jerusalem until a special power, the Holy Spirit, would come to them.

Jesus' disciples asked if he would now give the kingdom of Israel back to the people of God, taking it away from the Romans.

But Jesus said, "No one knows the times or seasons God has in mind for rulers.

But when the Holy Spirit comes to you, you will tell my story in Jerusalem, and Judea and Samaria and all over the world."

Then the disciples watched as a cloud came around Jesus and lifted him up into the heavens.

They watched until they couldn't see Jesus any more.

With the other hand remove the two men in white robes from the basket and place them near the disciples. Place the Jesus figure behind you.

Lift one hand and bring it slowly down to the floor.

Move the disciples a little distance to the left. Keep them close together.

Place all the wooden figures in the basket one at a time.

After speaking, return the basket to its place on the shelf carrying it with two hands. Return to the circle and sit down.

Dismiss the children to their work ONLY after everyone has had a chance to choose what they will do.

While they watched two men in white robes appeared.

They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? One day this Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way you saw him leave."

The disciples left then, and waited In Jerusalem, as Jesus had said.

WONDERING QUESTIONS:

┆ wonder if the disciples were sad to see Jesus go up into heaven?

┆ wonder where the men in white robes came from?

┆ wonder what the disciples talked about as they walked back to Jerusalem?

Watch carefully how ┆ put these materials away so you will know how to use them if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

Watch carefully where ┆ put this story away so you will be able to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

┆ wonder what you will do for your work today. Let's go around the circle and choose.

ASCENSION TEACHER HELPS

This story can be told either following the Emmaus story or just prior to Pentecost. The latter will be preferred if your class is made up primarily of younger children, since the carry over will be easier for them as we speak of waiting for the Holy Spirit in this lesson as well as in the Pentecost story.

It was obvious that Jesus' time on earth was finished. He had spent the last forty days talking and teaching with his disciples. They still believed Jesus would be the head of a political state, where the people of God would live. They did not completely understand that Jesus' kingdom was not to be here on earth (see Acts 1:6). But as Jesus talked with them, he promised them the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which would be different from John's baptism with water. Jesus then told the disciples that after the Holy Spirit came to them, they would be his witnesses not only in Jerusalem, but in all the known world.

After speaking to them, Jesus is lifted up in a cloud, from the Mount of Olives. While the disciples watched, unsure probably of just what they were to do or what would happen next, two men appeared. They are not identified as angels, but are often illustrated that way in children's Bible story books. These two men told the disciples that Jesus would return the same way he left. There is no promise of when, short or long time, that would be; just that it would happen.

At that point the disciples traveled the short distance from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem and waited there for the promised Holy Spirit. In Luke 24:50-52 we have a much shorter version of the ascension. It finished with these words, "And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God."

The reason this story is important for children is to help them understand that ordinary people are empowered to be the witnesses, the storytellers, the people who will pass on the Good News about Jesus where they live and everywhere they go. We are the people of God. We, too, are empowered to be witnesses.

The wondering questions begin by dealing with feelings. We are not told if the disciples are sad to see Jesus go to heaven. We want to say, "Of course, they would be!" Let's listen to the responses from the children and hear what they say.

The wondering question about the men in white robes may prompt a memory of the Easter story. Allow the "I wonders" to flow. For some this will be an angel, for others the men will be just men.

Encourage the children to wonder what the disciples talked about on the road back to Jerusalem. No doubt the disciples wondered when the Holy Spirit would come, what it would look like, and what it would do. They also may have wondered when Jesus would come back.

This story is the beginning of the responsibility of the New Testament people of God to live as God's people with only the memory of Jesus' words and not Jesus' physical presence. This curriculum is designed to strengthen the spirit of God in each of us to continue to do just that.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

In the account of this story in Matthew 28: 16-20, it says that the eleven remaining disciples came to the mountain as Jesus asked and worshiped him, "but some of them doubted." Imagine you are one of the disciples. You lived with Jesus, watched him cure people of illness, heard him tell amazing stories, saw him die and saw him come back to life. Would you still doubt? **BE HONEST!**

When Jesus left, I'm sure the disciples felt lonely. I wonder how Jesus felt? When you have a friend who moves away, do you think it's harder for your friend who goes to a new place or for you+the one left behind? Why?

Jesus' disciples stayed together after he left. Why should the people of God come together to worship, study and have fun? Sometimes, as we consider decisions we have to make, we are stronger in groups. Do you feel your Sunday School class is a place where you encourage each other to live lives at which God could rejoice?