

The Ascension of the Lord
A short para-liturgy to
Celebrate Christ's Ascension into Heaven

Background to this special Solemnity for members of staff

Forty Days after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Acts of the Apostles records Jesus' Ascension into heaven. The Ascension is an important Christian feast attesting and celebrating the reality of the Jesus Christ's returning to the Father, and promise to return again at the end of time. The Ascension is the final component of the paschal mystery, which consists also of Jesus' Passion, Crucifixion, Death, Burial, Descent among the Dead, and Resurrection. Along with the resurrection, the Ascension functioned as a proof of Jesus' claim that he was the Messiah.

The Catechism summarises three important truths about Jesus that are made clear in this special feast:

...Christ's Ascension marks the definitive entrance of Jesus' humanity into God's heavenly domain, whence he will come again (cf. Acts 1:11)

...Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, precedes us into the Father's glorious kingdom so that we, the members of his Body, may live in the hope of one day being with him for ever.

...Jesus Christ, having entered the sanctuary of heaven once and for all, intercedes constantly for us as the mediator who assures us of the permanent outpouring of the Holy Spirit (665-667).

Prayer Focus *A white of gold cloth- the Ascension is a solemnity and part of Eastertide.*

An open bible- Acts 1:6-11

An Image of Jesus ascending into heaven

Flowers

Candle - A bowl of water (representing the new life we receive in baptism)

We Gather –

You may wish to use a hymn or piece of music to set the scene. If you are able to sing together, the hymn All are Welcome would be a good opening for this worship. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=js8RtT0mJpc> – music and lyrics)

Reader 1:

We gather together as the family of God, united in faith, hope and love

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

Amen

Reader 2:

We celebrate the Ascension of the Lord because we believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and, after He promised to be with us always, returned to Heaven where He sits at the right hand of the Father. When Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples were shocked and afraid. They see Jesus return to heaven and went away worried about the future. In days' time, we will celebrate Pentecost in which the promise Jesus made to His friends and to the whole world comes true. Jesus does not leave us on our own. The Holy Spirit is with us as we go about making God's Kingdom of peace and love a reality here on earth.

Reader 3:

We turn to God now in prayer:

Loving Father,

We praise and thank You for the gift of Your Son, Jesus, who redeemed the whole world and revealed to us your unending love.

We praise and thank You for the gift of Your Holy Spirit who walks with us and guides our hearts. Help us listen and act according to Your will so we will one day enter Your Kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord

Amen

We open the scriptures now and allow God to speak directly to our hearts...

Reader 4: *This video could be used for younger children:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcFw8pLBSIo>

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When the apostles met together with Jesus, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time give the Kingdom back to Israel?”

Jesus said to them, “The times and occasions are set by my Father's own authority, and it is not for you to know when they will be. But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” After saying this, he was taken up to heaven as they watched him, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

They still had their eyes fixed on the sky as he went away, when two men dressed in white suddenly stood beside them and said, “Galileans, why are you standing there looking up at the sky? This Jesus, who was taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way that you saw him go to heaven.”

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

You could play some quiet music now as the children reflect on the reading

Reflection on the Ascension-

Jesus ascending to Heaven reminds us that although we cannot see Jesus, we are able to feel His presence close to us through prayer, the sacraments and through each other.

The disciples were terrified to see their friend leave them. They felt like Jesus was abandoning them.

Later, they received the Gift of the Spirit that had been promised to them. They were not alone.

The Disciples went away and relied on each other to bring comfort and support.

We pray that we might be supportive to those around us and trust that although we cannot see Jesus physically with us, we can feel His love when we show love to others and receive that love from those around us.

Music: Blest be the Lord (Or another piece of music for reflection)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPBw-1ZHCnw>

We pray together –

The response to our litany prayers is: *Christ is risen, Alleluia!*

God of life, we give You praise and glory: *Christ is risen, Alleluia!*

Jesus is victorious over death: *Christ is risen, Alleluia!*

Jesus has ascended to heaven: *Christ is risen, Alleluia!*

Jesus sends the spirit to guide our lives: *Christ is risen, Alleluia!*

Jesus will come again in glory: *Christ is risen, Alleluia!*

We join together as one family as we pray in the words given to us by Jesus:

Our Father, Who art in heaven,

Hallowed be Thy Name.

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy Will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

Amen.

May the Lord bless us and keep us safe

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

Amen