Mission Together

The Ascension - Celebration of the Word

Introduction for teachers / leaders: The feast of the Ascension is designated as a solemnity. This marks it is a feast of great importance within the Catholic Church. The Ascension takes place 40 days after Easter Sunday and commemorates the day on which the resurrected Jesus leaves his disciples in Galilee to join God the Father in heaven. Before he did so, Jesus shared with his disciples his final instruction – known as the Great Commission – to go out and deliver the message of God's love and mercy with everyone, everywhere. This is the mission all Christ's followers continue to share, and which this liturgical prayer encourages pupils to fulfil.

GATHER: Setting the scene

Please refer to our guide: *How to Pray with Children*
missiontogether.org.uk/prayer-resources/

Opening hymn or recorded music

Suggested hymn: *He is Lord.*

Introduction

Print the introduction on page 2 and ask pupils to read.

Sign of the cross, opening prayer

Print the opening prayer on page 2 and ask pupils to read.

WORD: Bible reading Matthew 28:16-20 GNT.

Print the reading on page 2 and ask pupils to read.

Bible reflection

See page 3. We suggest this is delivered by a teacher / chaplain.

RESPOND: Prayers of intercession

Print the prayers of intercession on page 4 and ask pupils to read.

SENT: Mission Together prayer

See to the right.

Sign of the cross

Closing hymn or recorded music

Our suggestions: *God's Spirit is in my heart.*

Follow up activities

The Ascension Comprehension Task

Mission Together Prayer

May all children
In the world
Share love
Share friendship and live
In the peace
Of God's love
Now and forever. **Amen.**

Mission Together is the children's branch of Missio, the Pope's charity for world mission.
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missio.org.uk Registered in England and Wales Charity No. 1056651

The Ascension Celebration of the Word

Introduction

Reader: Today we join together in prayer to remember the day when Jesus left his disciples in Galilee to join God the Father in heaven. This event took place forty days after Easter Sunday and is celebrated by Christians around the world, because it is the day Jesus made a place for us in heaven.

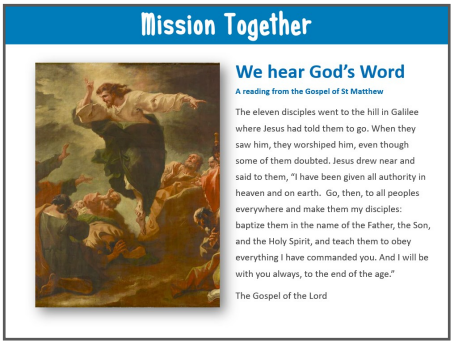
Reader: On Ascension day we also hear the last words Jesus spoke to his disciples while he was still with them in Galilee. With these words, Jesus set the disciples a great mission. It is a mission we all share today. Let's begin with our opening prayer, then listen carefully to what Jesus had to say.

Sign of the cross and opening prayer

Reader: God our Father, today we rejoice that your Son, Jesus, has joined you in heaven. From heaven, Jesus has promised to stay with us forever. Encouraged by this promise, help us to share your love and mercy with everyone we meet; for this is the mission your Son gave us. We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Bible reading

Reader: **A reading from the Gospel of Saint Matthew**



The eleven disciples went to the hill in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him, even though some of them doubted. Jesus drew near and said to them, 'I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.

The Gospel of the Lord.
R/ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

The Ascension Celebration of the Word

Bible reflection (We suggest this is delivered by a teacher / chaplain)

The event we heard about in our Gospel reading happened 40 days after the first Easter Sunday; around 2,000 years ago. Over the hundreds of years since then, artists have tried to picture the moment when Jesus returned to God the Father. If we look at the painting on screen we can see Jesus rising from the ground.

With one hand, Jesus is pointing to heaven. This reminds us that when the day came for Jesus to leave his life on earth, he didn't disappear into thin air. Nor did he move to an unknown place where no one would find him. Instead Jesus journeyed to a place that, thanks to him, all God's children shall one day journey to too. That place is heaven.

Now let's look at Jesus' other hand. This hand is pointing far away, out of the picture frame. We can imagine that as Jesus points into the distance he is instructing his disciples to tell everyone, everywhere about God's love and mercy. This is a huge mission! To fulfil it, the disciples would have to go to places they'd never been before and speak with people they didn't know. No wonder the disciples in the painting look shocked, maybe a little afraid.

Let's stop to wonder how you might feel if you'd been one of those disciples, instructed to travel far and wide and to share God's love and mercy with everyone you met. [Refer to figures in the painting]. Would you pray for help? Would you try and hide? Would you face this mission with courage and confidence?

It's good to stop and think about how we would respond, because the mission that Jesus set his disciples on that first Ascension day is the one he sets us. We are also called to share God's love and mercy with everyone, everywhere. It can sound a huge task, as it did to the disciples. But like so many things in life, it's not so big when we undertake this mission together with others.

For example, it would be very difficult for just one pupil here at [school name] to create a sense of welcome and kindness that everyone could feel when they came into school. But when all of us are welcoming and kind to others, then our school becomes a place where God's love is known to everyone, and where others can recognise ways they can share God's love too.

Another thing that makes our mission more achievable is remembering that ten days after the Ascension, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to strengthen his Apostles and to help them fulfil their mission. The same Holy Spirit who came down on the Apostles at Pentecost strengthens and guides us too. Let us call on the Holy Spirit now as we listen to our bidding prayers.

The Ascension Celebration of the Word

Prayers of intercession

Reader: The response to our prayer is: **Hear our prayer.**

Reader: Heavenly Father, we pray for our school and parish family. Guided by your Holy Spirit may we work together with faith and confidence, treat each other with kindness and compassion, and build a community where the example of your Son, Jesus, is followed by all.

Lord, in your mercy...

Reader: Heavenly Father, we pray for missionaries who travel the world to share the message of your love and mercy . May they may follow closely the example of your Son, Jesus, and build with all people your kingdom of justice and peace.

Lord, in your mercy...

Reader: Heavenly Father, we pray for our loved ones who have joined you and your Son, Jesus, in heaven. May they rest with you in peace and continue to pray for us here on earth.

Lord, in your mercy…

Reader: Heavenly Father, we pray for the children overseas whom Mission Together helps: those who are poor, hungry, sad or scared. May they find hope in your love and may we always be ready to help them.

Lord, in your mercy...

Reader: Let us now say the Mission Together prayer.

May all children
In the world
Share love
Share friendship and live
In the peace
Of God's love,
Now and forever. Amen.

Sign of the cross

Closing hymn or recorded music: *God's Spirit is in my heart*

Fundraising Ideas

Mission Together is the children's branch of Missio – the Catholic Church's official children's charity for overseas mission. Thanks to children in England and Wales, we can provide life-changing aid around the world in whatever form it's needed. That could be a new school, feeding programme, or a generator for a children's home. Mission Together helps all children, regardless of background or beliefs. That's how we show the all-embracing nature of the Catholic Church and the true meaning of 'mission'. Fundraising is a brilliant way to involve everyone in raising money for Mission Together. Below are a few seasonal ideas, but you can find other ways to get involved throughout the year by visiting our webpage https://missiontogether.org.uk/fundraising-ideas/

Please ***share your fundraising events*** with us @MissioUK, adding the hashtag #missiontogether

Ideas for Summer term

Weeding Week: while the days are sunny and warm, why not raise money by weeding gardens? Ask for a suggested donation, or sponsorship per bag of weeds. Children can work alone, with friends, or siblings. Maybe green fingered children could also offer to plant and prune too. Who knows if your Weeding Week might inspire the next Monty Don!

Open air cinema: a big sheet, a projector and some fairy lights and you can host a magical movie night under the stars! Charge people entry to come and see movies on your outdoor screen. Invite whole families and make a big picnic of it.

Sports day fun: host a football tournament, sports day or outdoor activity day. Charge people to attend and sell refreshments. Prize for the tournament winners!

Sponsored swim, walk or cycle: get everyone involved in some outdoor fun once the weather's better. Could you get sponsored to walk a certain distance, or hold a sponsored swim?

Scavenger hunt: this is a great team activity! Print off some sheets with things to spot on them. You can tailor the items to be outdoors, indoors or whatever suits your space and environment. Either get teams to tick the items off or take pictures to prove they've found them! Charge teams to enter and give prizes for the fastest finishers.

Big summer BBQ: hold a family barbecue, street party or big picnic at your school. Serve up food and treats, hold stalls with tombolas and raffle prizes, even set up some games like hook a duck or skittles and quoits. The great thing about these events is that they can be as simple or involved as you like. Sell tickets to attend.