

The Final Earthly Encounter



Luke 24:36-49; Acts 1:1-11

To bring our Encounters series to a close, we will discover the significance of Jesus' ascension to Heaven. In this final earthly encounter, Jesus met with his disciples, calming their fears and bringing his peace. Although he wouldn't give them the answers they desired, Jesus promised to empower the disciples with the Holy Spirit. Through his ascension, the disciples would experience more of Jesus, not less. As Christians today, we can experience the fulfilment of that same promise of power.

You will need:

- Paper
- Felt-tip pens



Beat

Say:

During our Bassline Encounters series, we have witnessed the many moments Jesus met with people after his death and resurrection. For our Beat activity, we're going to see how much you have remembered from the last five sessions.

Encounters Quiz

1. Who was the first person to see Jesus alive after the resurrection? [Mary Magdalene]
2. In what ways has Mary Magdalene been misrepresented throughout history? [She is often depicted as a sex worker despite no evidence to support this, and some even believe that she was the wife of Jesus.]
3. What village were the two disciples travelling to when they met Jesus? [Emmaus]
4. At what moment did the two disciples recognise Jesus? [When they ate together, and Jesus broke the bread for them to eat.]
5. What is Thomas's nickname? [Doubting Thomas - though this is not scriptural.]



6. What did Thomas want to do before he was willing to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead? [See the nail marks in Jesus' hand, put his finger where the nails were and put his hand in the wound on Jesus' side.]
7. What meal did Jesus cook for the disciples when he saw them fishing in the Sea of Galilee? [Breakfast]
8. How many times did Jesus ask Peter if he loved him? [Three times]
9. Where did Jesus meet with the disciples to share the Great Commission? [On a mountain.]
10. What are the main commands within the Great Commission?
[19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. (Matthew 28:19-20)]

 **Bridge****Ask:**

- Which encounter with Jesus would you like to learn more about? Explain your answer.

 **Amplify****Say:**

In our Bible reading today we witness the final earthly encounter between Jesus and his disciples. Although Luke and Acts are two parts of the same book, the author chooses to describe the ascension of Jesus to Heaven in both books. The book of Luke details the life of Jesus and completes his earthly ministry by describing his ascension to Heaven.

Read:

³⁶ While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'

³⁷ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, 'Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.'

⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, 'Do you have anything here to eat?' ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.

⁴⁴ He said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you: everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.'

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them,

'This is what is written: the Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.'

– (Luke 24:36-49)

Ask:

- Despite the numerous encounters with the risen Jesus, what do you notice about the disciples' response to his arrival?
- What familiar greeting did Jesus say to the disciples? Why do you think they needed peace at that moment?
- Why do you think Jesus asked them for something to eat?
- How did Jesus use Scripture to explain his death and resurrection?
- What did Jesus mean when he said, 'I am going to send you what my Father has promised'? John 14:16-17 may help you to answer this question.

Read:

⁵⁰ When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵² Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

– (Luke 24:50-53)

Say:

This was the second time the disciples had seen Jesus leave. The first time was through his death on the cross, the second was through Jesus' ascension to Heaven.

Ask:

How was the disciples' reaction to Jesus' departure different this time? Explain your thoughts.

Say:

The disciples returned to the Temple to worship Jesus. They were filled with great joy and praised God. They knew that this was the start of something new. Although the physical ministry of Jesus here on earth was over, a new ministry through God's Church was about to begin. The book of Acts tells of the continuing ministry of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Read:

¹ In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ² until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³ After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴ On one occasion, while he was eating

with them, he gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.’

⁶ Then they gathered round him and asked him, ‘Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?’

⁷ He said to them: ‘It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’

⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.’

– (Acts 1:1-11)

Ask:

The disciples asked for knowledge about what would happen in the future, but what were they promised instead?

Say:

Just before Jesus ascended into Heaven, he promised the disciples that they would receive power. The power of the Holy Spirit would enable them to witness to everyone about who Jesus is.

Ask:

- How does it feel to know that, as a follower of Jesus, you can access this same power?
- What is your experience of being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit?

 **Bridge****Ask:**

What is your response to the following quote?

‘The ascension reminds us that Christianity is not only an historical faith, but a faith of the present and future. Jesus is, right now, in glorified humanity on the throne of the universe, wielding as the God-man “all authority in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18). He is not just our suffering servant who came and died and rose triumphant, but our actively ruling, actively conquering king.’

– David Mathis

||| Sound Check

Leader's notes:

The aim of the Sound Check activity is for young people to recall the key events of the Ascension and understand their significance for Christians today. Watch the clip together and ask the group to take notes. Focus on the seven reasons for the significance of the ascension of Jesus. Once the clip has finished, encourage the group to come up with a creative way to remember what Ascension Day is all about. They could use mind maps, create a mnemonic, make up a short song, or anything that helps them remember the key events and significance of Jesus' ascension.

Watch:

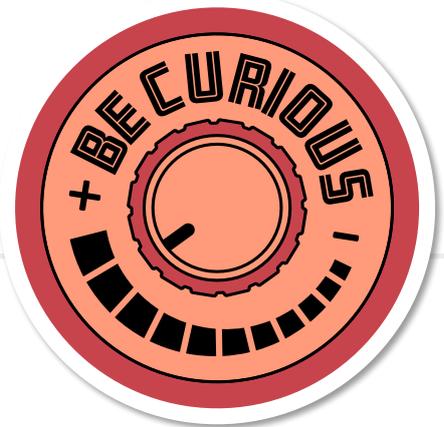
What is the meaning and importance of the ascension of Jesus Christ? – Got Question Ministries (stop at 2:22)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8-6BjpOwiU>

 **Bridge**

Ask:

How would you summarise the events celebrated on Ascension Day to someone who isn't a Christian?



 **Selah**

Say:

For our Selah time today, we will pause and reflect on the significance of Jesus' ascension.

Watch:

Why Did Jesus Have to Ascend? (3:53)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9BFxNI17sO>

Ask:

- How does the ascension of Jesus give us more of him rather than less?
- How do you experience Jesus through the presence of the Holy Spirit?

Leader's notes:

Using the reflections of the young people as a foundation, share in prayer on behalf of the group.

Coda

Say:

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.

Ask:

- As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?
- What is the one thing you will take away from this session about the significance of the ascension of Jesus?

Leader's notes:

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.

