Preschool–Grade 6

The Great Commission and Ascension

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus sends us to tell everyone about Him, starting right where we are, and He is with us always.
Bible passage: Matthew 28:16–20 and Acts 1:1–11. Read them before class.
Memory verse: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" *Matthew 28:19 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Write four signs on paper: "Jerusalem," "Judaea," "Samaria" and "The uttermost part of the earth."

1. Opening game: Farther and Farther (5–10 minutes)

Tape the "Jerusalem" sign in the middle of the room, "Judaea" a few steps away, "Samaria" farther away and "The uttermost part of the earth" in the farthest corner. All the kids start at Jerusalem. Ask a question about Jesus that they know (Where was He born? Who did He feed? Did He rise again?). Each right answer lets the whole class take one step out toward the next sign. Keep going until the class reaches the farthest corner. Ask: *How does good news get from one place to the whole world?* Say: "Today Jesus gives His followers a job that starts in one city and reaches the whole world."

2. Bible story: Go Ye Therefore (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Matthew 28. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

On a mountain in Galilee. After Jesus rose from the dead, He showed Himself alive to His apostles "by many **infallible proofs**" (sure proofs no one could deny), and they saw Him for forty days (Acts 1:3). **Look up Matthew 28:16.** The eleven disciples went to the mountain in Galilee where Jesus had **appointed** them, which means where He told them to come. When they saw Him, they worshipped Him, but some **doubted**, which means they were not sure yet (28:17).

All power. Look up Matthew 28:18. Spake means spoke. Jesus has all power in heaven and on earth. Nothing is bigger than Jesus.

The Great Commission. A commission is a job you are sent to do. **Look up Matthew 28:19. Teach all nations** means teach people in every country and people group. **Look up Matthew 28:20. Observe** means obey. **Lo** means look, and **alway** means always. Jesus promised to be with them every day, "even unto the end of the world."

Wait for the promise. Jesus told the apostles not to **depart** (leave) Jerusalem, but to wait for "the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4). John baptized with water, but they would be baptized with the Holy Ghost "not many days hence," which means in a few days (1:5). They asked if He would now give the kingdom back to Israel. Jesus said it was not for them to know the times, which the Father has in His own power (1:6–7). **Look up Acts 1:8. Witnesses** are people who tell what they saw and know. Jerusalem was the city they were in, Judaea was the land around it, Samaria was the land next to it, and **the uttermost part of the earth** means the farthest places in the world.

Taken up. Look up Acts 1:9. Beheld means they were watching. Jesus was taken up, and a cloud **received** Him (took Him in) out of their sight. They **looked stedfastly** (kept staring) toward heaven. Then two men stood by them in white **apparel**, which means clothes (1:10). **Look up Acts 1:11. Gazing** means staring. The same Jesus will come again "in like manner," the same way they saw Him go.

Other Gospels tell it too. Mark writes that Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Luke writes "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). That is just what happened: in Jerusalem, Peter preached repentance and baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

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3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Some disciples doubted, and Jesus still came and spoke to them (Matthew 28:17–18). What does that tell you about Jesus?
2. Jesus said "teach all nations." Why does Jesus want every person in the world to hear about Him?
3. Acts 1:8 starts with Jerusalem, the place they already were. Where is your "Jerusalem"? Who is right around you every day?
4. How does Jesus' promise "I am with you alway" (28:20) help when you feel shy or afraid?
5. The two men said Jesus will come again (Acts 1:11). How should knowing that change the way we live?

Recall questions

1. How many disciples went to the mountain in Galilee? *(Eleven, Matthew 28:16)*
2. For how many days did the apostles see Jesus alive? *(Forty days, Acts 1:3)*
3. What did Jesus tell them to wait for in Jerusalem? *(The promise of the Father, Acts 1:4)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **go ye therefore** means so you go, and **teach all nations** means teach people everywhere. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus sent His followers to tell the whole world, and that good news has come all the way to us. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: tell one person you already know what Jesus has done for you, or invite a friend to church with your parents' help.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Matthew 28:16: Where did the eleven disciples go? *(Into Galilee, into a mountain)*
2. Matthew 28:17: What did they do when they saw Jesus? *(They worshipped Him)*
3. Matthew 28:18: How much power is given to Jesus? *(All power in heaven and in earth)*
4. Matthew 28:20: How long did Jesus say He would be with them? *(Alway, even unto the end of the world)*
5. Acts 1:3: How many days was Jesus seen by them? *(Forty days)*
6. Acts 1:5: What would they be baptized with? *(With the Holy Ghost)*
7. Acts 1:9: What received Jesus out of their sight? *(A cloud)*
8. Acts 1:10: How many men stood by them in white apparel? *(Two)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that Jesus has all power and is with us always. Help us tell the people around us about You, with kindness and courage. Thank You that Jesus is coming again. In Jesus' name, amen."

Telling others, at this age: kids share with people they already know (family, friends, classmates), kindly and without arguing, and always with a parent's OK. Never send children to strangers or door to door.

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