Preschool–Grade 6

The Great Commission and Ascension

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus, who has all power, sends us to be His witnesses, beginning where we live, and He is with us always.
Bible passage: Matthew 28:16–20 and Acts 1:1–11. Students read both passages out loud themselves.
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)* and "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." *Acts 1:8 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Matthew 28, Acts 1 and Acts 2:36–41. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Pass It On (5–10 minutes)

Ask: *How did you first hear about Jesus? Who told you?* Let students answer (a parent, a grandparent, a pastor, a friend). Write the names of who told them on the board. Then ask: *Who told that person?* Draw arrows going back. Say: "Every one of us heard about Jesus because someone, somewhere, obeyed what Jesus said in today's passage. The chain goes all the way back to eleven men on a mountain in Galilee."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Matthew 28:16–20. Students take turns. Old words in this passage:

- **appointed** (28:16): told them to come there
- **doubted** (28:17): were not sure yet
- **spake** (28:18): spoke; **all power**: all authority, over everything
- **teach all nations** (28:19): teach people in every country and people group
- **observe** (28:20): obey and keep; **lo**: look; **alway**: always

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Read out loud: Acts 1:1–11. Old words in this passage:

- **former treatise** (1:1): Luke's first book, the Gospel of Luke; **Theophilus**: the man Luke wrote to
- **passion** (1:3): Jesus' suffering and death; **infallible proofs**: sure proofs no one could deny
- **depart** (1:4): leave; **the promise of the Father**: the Holy Ghost (1:5)
- **not many days hence** (1:5): in a few days
- **witnesses** (1:8): people who tell what they have seen and know; **the uttermost part of the earth**: the farthest places in the world
- **beheld** (1:9): were watching; **received him**: took Him in
- **stedfastly** (1:10): without looking away; **apparel**: clothes
- **gazing** (1:11): staring; **in like manner**: the same way

Tell the rest in your own words: Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet (Acts 1:12) and waited in prayer (1:14). Mark writes that Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:15–16). Luke says "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). A few days later, on the day of Pentecost, it began in Jerusalem, just as Jesus said: Peter preached repentance and baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Matthew 28:17 says some doubted, even while they worshipped. Jesus came to them anyway (28:18). What does that say to someone who has questions?
2. Jesus begins with "All power is given unto me" (28:18) before He says "Go." Why does it matter who is sending us?
3. Jesus said to teach people "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (28:20). Why does it matter to teach people to obey Jesus, not just to know about Him?
4. Acts 1:8 starts with Jerusalem, the city they were already in. Who is in your "Jerusalem": your home, school, team and friends?
5. Jesus said they would receive power after the Holy Ghost came (1:8). Why do you think He told them to wait for that before they went?
6. The two men said this same Jesus will come again (1:11). How does that change how you spend this week?

4. Memory verses (5 minutes)

Old words in Acts 1:8: **receive power** means God gives you strength you don't have on your own. **Witnesses unto me** means people who tell about Jesus. **The uttermost part of the earth** means everywhere, to the ends of the world.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Matthew 28:19 this week; keep working on Acts 1:8 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Jesus sent His apostles to preach repentance and remission of sins in His name, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47). Here is the good news they preached. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the Holy Ghost, the power Jesus promised in Acts 1:8, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Who told me about Jesus, and how can I thank them?
2. Who is one person in my "Jerusalem" (home, school, team) who needs to know Jesus loves them?
3. Write a short prayer asking God for courage, kindness and the right words to tell them.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: tell one person you already know what Jesus has done for you, or invite them to church. Be kind and patient; you don't have to argue or win.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that Jesus has all power and is with us always. Thank You for the people who told us about You. Give us courage and kindness to tell others, and help us live ready for Jesus to come again. In Jesus' name, amen."

Telling others, at this age: students share with people they already know, kindly, with their parents' knowledge, and never with pressure. Sharing Jesus is an invitation, not an argument. Never send students to strangers or door to door.

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