



Jesus met His friends and gave them an important job—to go and share His message of love and kindness to the world. He promised He would always be with them.

Can you think of a person—a parent, sibling or friend—who encourages you to share love and kindness?

Draw or write about this 'Jesus person' and how they encourage you to share love and kindness.



Father, I thank You for the gift of this story which has helped me see the kind and loving presence of Your Son in my life.

Action: this week I will try to show love by...

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LECTIO DIVINA

Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Year A - Ascension

A resource for personal, family and community prayer.



Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20

You are invited to read the Gospel passage attentively, respectfully and reverently as a gift of God.

The eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'

Background to Gospel passage

Where does it happen?

A mountain (place associated with encountering God) in Galilee, the northernmost region of first century Palestine.

When does it happen?

This happens forty days after the Resurrection and just before Jesus ascends to be seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

Who is there?

Jesus, the Risen Lord, is surrounded by his eleven disciples.

What happens?

At the Ascension Jesus withdraws (ascends to his Father) and hands over to his disciples the work of promoting the reign of God, with the reassurance that he will always be with them. Jesus is confident that if he steps back a bit the disciples will grow in stature, will take more responsibility and will grow in their own gifts. He is confident that they will blossom in their own creativity and commitment under the influence of the Holy Spirit. They will come to realise the important contribution they have to make and will be given an opportunity to make it.

Suggested Guidelines to help you recognise this passage in your life experience.

“When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated.”

Can you enter into the experience of the disciples by remembering an occasion when you were confronted with a significant “change” in your life and you responded with confusion and hesitancy?

“Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Can you remember an ‘ascension moment’, when you were leaving home, family, friends, school or workplace - and you spoke similar beautiful words of blessing, of encouragement or inspiration and reassurance for those you were leaving behind? The Gospel ‘blessing’ of Jesus has lived again in you.

“teach them to observe all the commands

I gave you.”

Can you remember an experience of lovingly withdrawing from some position of responsibility so as to allow others to come to the fore, to discover their own gifts and talents and make their own unique contribution to the work at hand? You reassured them of your constant support and love and, in doing so, the ascension of Jesus has lived again in you.

“And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.”

Can you remember a special reunion or gathering of family, neighbours or old school friends? You were conscious of those who were missing – had moved away or passed on, and even though you felt the loss you were strengthened and sustained by precious memories and the nearness of their love. Jesus’ promise “to be with you always” was fulfilled again.

What does this Gospel remind me of? *Where was it? When was it? Who was there? What happened?*

Now I can see that God’s loving presence and action were in that life experience.

Prayer Response - you are invited to respond in prayer in your own words.

Heavenly Father, I thank you for the times when I have experienced this Gospel in my life...

Heavenly Father, I am sorry for the times I have fallen short of living this Gospel...

Heavenly Father, please help me to live this Gospel...



You are invited to deepen this prayer experience by resting your heart silently in God’s presence and love. The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage may help you on this journey to stillness and silence, e.g. “I am with you always”.

An Invitation to Reflect

What new insight has the Gospel opened my eyes to see?

Action

This week I will try to live the Gospel by...

Thought for the week

Love knows when and how to withdraw for the good of the other.
Rest in this truth, hold it in prayer and trust that it will bear fruit in your life.