

God's Story Part 1: God's Kingdom Grows

Gold Bag

Mount of Olives, a gift box and flame, cloud, two angels, flashlight, basket and twine (tie twine to basket), boat

To begin:

- Have a Bible open to one of the accounts of the ascension (Mark 16, Luke 24, or Acts 1) Have a family member light the battery-operated candle and explain that this light represents God's presence as you tell His story.
- Pass the first 8 blocks around the table and place them in the center.
- Have a family member begin with prayer before you tell the story.

You may use this script or tell the story in your own words.

To set up the story, use the laminated map of Jerusalem and your props from last month. You may choose whether to put out the tomb and cross. After watching the video, you will see where to place the new props.

The Ascension of Jesus: Acts 1:1-1, Matthew 28:16-18, Mark 15:16-20, Luke 24:49-53

Mount of Olives - Ascension

Props from gold bag: Mount of Olives, gift box with flame, cloud,

From previous stories: peg people for Jesus and disciples, angel

"After Jesus rose from the dead, he visited his friends many times to prove he was alive. He took them to the Mount of Olives and discussed the Kingdom of God." (*put down the crown*) "They all got very excited and were ready to go tell everyone but Jesus said, 'Do not leave Jerusalem until my Father sends you a gift,' (*put down a gift box with a flame inside*) 'You remember that baptism is a new beginning. John baptized people with water, but soon, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit comes, he will give you the power to tell my story.' Jesus wanted them to know they were his people. They were his storykeepers, so someday the whole world would know his true story."

"He told them to start spreading the good news in Jerusalem and then go to Judea" (*move your hand north a short distance*) "and Samaria" (*move your hand north a bit farther away*) "and then to the ends of the world" (*spread your hands out to show a large distance east and west*). "I want you to go and make more followers by baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." (*Make the sign of the cross on the table next to the mountain*) "Teach the believers to obey everything I told you. And remember," (*say this slowly*) 'I am with you always, even to the end of time.'"

"When he finished talking, he reached out his hands and blessed them" (*hold your hand out over his friends*). "Then he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching" (*put Jesus behind the cloud and move Jesus away*) "He sat down right next to God, and then they could no longer see him. While they were trying to see him rise into heaven, suddenly angels stood among them." (*bring out an angel*) "One asked, 'Why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus

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has been taken from you, but someday, he will return in the same way you saw him go!' The disciples had so much to talk about!" (*Put disciples in the upper room*)

Pentecost: Acts 2

From previous stories: river, chain, table, bread disc, wine cup

Move to the Upper Room (have disciples inside the room and people outside - closer to the temple)

"Ten days later the great Festival of Pentecost took place. Thousands and thousands of people came to Jerusalem from faraway places to celebrate. Many were God's people who had scattered during the Exile."

"While all of Jesus' followers were in one room, suddenly there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house." (*Bring out a gift box and take out the flame*). "Then, what looked like flames appeared and settled on each of them." (*Put flames on their heads*). "Everyone in the room was filled with the Holy Spirit and he gave all of them the ability to speak in different languages." (*disciples spoke in other languages*) "The crowd outside heard the loud noise and came running. They were surprised to hear each of their languages spoken by the believers." (*people responded in their language*.) "When Peter saw the large crowd, he told them, 'Jesus is the one you have all waited for, but you crucified him on a cross. He is God's son, who died to forgive your sins and break the power of darkness.' God's word tells us that Peter's words flew like an arrow right to their hearts, and they began to ask him and the others, 'What should we do now?'"

"Peter told them, 'It is simple. All you have to do is tell God you want to be forgiven for your sins. You can be baptized and receive the same gift of the Holy Spirit as we were given.' This is God's promise to everyone who wants to be God's people."

(Baptize people in the river) "That day 3000 people believed that Jesus was God's son and they were baptized. After this, many of them stayed in Jerusalem and became one big family. They shared bread and wine to remember Jesus, just as he told them to. They shared everything. They sold all that they owned and used the money to feed the poor. They worshiped every day together and ate meals in each other's homes. God's word says that every day more people believed Jesus was God's son and they continued to join the community of believers." (*bringing in more people*)

"But not everyone was happy! Jesus' enemies were angry." (*Pharisees stand at the front of the temple, and a disabled man is lying on the ground near them*) "They thought they had stopped all of this by killing Jesus but there were even more followers now. Peter and John started healing people in the name of Jesus." (*help the man stand up*) "and telling anyone who would listen that Jesus was alive. By now, 5000 people believed Jesus was God's son. The temple leaders arrested the disciples" (*wrapping them in a chain*). "But so many people were praising God for the miracles and talking about Jesus that they finally let the disciples go home" (*unwrap Peter and John*). "From that time on no follower of Jesus was safe in Jerusalem. That didn't stop them from telling people about Jesus."

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Paul's story (place Paul in the story near the Temple)

Props from the gold bag: flashlight

"One man was very angry about Jesus. His name was Paul. He wanted to kill everyone who followed Jesus. You can read stories about Paul in the book of Acts in God's Word. He didn't believe Jesus was God's son. Everyone was afraid of him and many new believers left Jerusalem, moved away but continued to tell people about Jesus." (*move some people out of Jerusalem and go north*)

(Paul on a road headed north to Damascus).

"At noon one day, he was traveling on the road and a bright light appeared. He fell to the ground." (*use your little flashlights*) "Then he heard a voice asking, 'Paul, why are you treating me so badly?' (*stand Jesus in front of Paul who is on the ground*). 'I am Jesus and I want you to listen to me from now on.' Meeting Jesus that day changed Paul's life. Soon Paul was out telling people about Jesus and the Kingdom of God."

God's Kingdom Grows (gather an angel, soldier, the flame of the Holy Spirit, and Peter)

Props from gold bag: basket and twine, laminated map of Paul's journey, plastic boat

From previous stories: city backdrop, scroll, coins,

"There are so many exciting stories in the Book of Acts, like when an angel appeared to a Roman soldier and told him to ask Peter to visit him. When Peter shared the story of Jesus with them, they all received the gift of the Holy Spirit" (*place flame over every person*). "Now all people were invited to be God's people and a part of God's kingdom."

(Use a city backdrop for this town) "Another time Paul was teaching about Jesus in a town and the people were so angry they wanted to kill him so his friends hid him in a basket and lowered him down a wall to escape the city." (*use a basket and twine to lower Paul to safety*)

(Use the laminated map of Paul's journeys) "The good news of Jesus spread to the city of Antioch, 300 miles north of Jerusalem. The city was filled with people from all over the world. This is the first place Jesus' followers were called Christians, which means "Christ-followers." They heard the good news that Jesus died, rose again, and was the king of the world and they believed. Paul visited them to teach them more about Jesus and traveled to many places to tell God's story. Jesus was building a great big family!"

"Paul and others traveled to many places and they were kicked out of town often. They talked about Jesus at the dinner table, on the road, and at the local church. After Paul left the city, he wrote them long letters to encourage them to follow Jesus even in difficult times. You can read these letters in God's Word." (*Put down a scroll*)

(Put out Paul and a few people) "Finally, Paul traveled to Jerusalem because the people were hungry and had no food. He brought money from other churches to feed them. He knew it was dangerous but he risked his life to help them." (*Paul lays down coins*)

(Put Pharisees and people in front of the temple) "His enemies found him and wanted to kill him but Roman soldiers saved his life and shipped him off to prison" (*put Paul in the boat on*

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the laminated map) “and eventually, he went to Rome where he died. He had a wild adventure on his trips and you can read more about it in God’s word. Paul spent the rest of his life telling others about Jesus. The Kingdom of God grew because everyone wanted to share the good news!”

“The story isn’t over because Jesus said the Good News would reach the end of the earth and it hasn’t yet.

I wonder...

I wonder what Jesus’ friends thought when he went to heaven in a cloud.

I wonder how the disciples felt when they received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I wonder why people wanted to become a Christian even though it was dangerous.

I wonder how they knew it was the Holy Spirit.

I wonder how Paul felt on his travels telling others about Jesus and the Good News.

I wonder if you would risk your life to tell others about Jesus.

I wonder what happens next.