

middle school



Ascension / April 19, 2020

Coming Back

By Kelsey Grulke

for use as
STEP 1 

Ascension Lesson

Focus:

Jesus will be back.

Ascension Lesson

Bible Basis:

Acts 1:1-11

Ascension Lesson

Memory Verse:

“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 1:11b

Students will reflect on their experiences in the last couple of months and consider how being prepared is important.

Materials:

Internet access

As you have opportunity to interface with your students via a video conferencing platform or even e-mail, text, or phone call, be sure to ask each one personally how they are doing and ask if you can pray with them. There will be a variety of responses. Some will just be bored, others scared. Some may have been directly affected by COVID-19 through illness or job losses in their family. Be sensitive to what you might find. Remember, it's possible some of them may display an “it's no big deal” attitude as a coping mechanism to hide other emotions.

Ask your students what was going on in their lives two months ago—at the end of February. Likely, their lives were very different then.

Here's a news clip from the end of February. It's instructing people to prepare for what might be coming, if the coronavirus were to become a pandemic in the US (remember, things were very different back then. We didn't know how bad it would get.)

Preparing for Potential Coronavirus Pandemic [2:29]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ih6kyzkjtHU>

➤ **Looking back, what did they get right in this video?** (Answers will vary and could include: Families need to stock up, everyone should have a plan in place, etc.)

➤ **What did this news report get wrong, given where we are today?** (Answers will vary and could include: Your concern only needs to be a level 2; it's not that big of a deal; companies will still be working out of offices but might have a reduced staff; if we take a few minor precautions like washing our hands and covering our mouths when we cough, we will be OK, etc.)

➤ **With the knowledge you have today, what else would you suggest they add to this story?** (Answers will vary but might include: Don't buy all the toilet paper, stay home, take social distancing seriously, it will take longer to get through this than we thought, etc.)

Our lives feel so different now than they did when this news report first aired. We don't like it when our "normal" way of doing things gets changed and we don't know what's coming next. When Jesus rose up into the clouds, His disciples probably felt the same way. What was their "new normal" going to be like? For one thing they wondered if they would ever see Jesus again. Let's find out more about that.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

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Coming Back

for use as
STEP 4 

Ascension Lesson

Focus:

Jesus will be back.

Ascension Lesson

Bible Basis:

Acts 1:1-11

Ascension Lesson

Memory Verse:

“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 1:11b

Materials:

- Internet access
- Smartphones
- Art supplies (various)

➤ **There’s been a lot on the Internet lately about this virus being “apocalyptic.” What does that word mean to you?** (Possible answers might include that it sounds like something in the Book of Revelation, that it means the end of the world is coming, that it is a bad event affecting everyone around the world, etc.)

➤ **How do you feel when you hear things like that?** (Allow your students to share thoughts/fears.)

Jesus told us things like this would happen so that we won’t live in fear. When we start to see what some people may describe as apocalyptic events, it just means He is coming soon. Jesus tells us in Luke 21:11, 28: “There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.... When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Here’s a verse that tells us just what His return will be like. Ask your students to read 1 Thessalonians 4:16: “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”

There’s an old, famous song that gets a lot of its words from that verse: *It Is Well With My Soul*.

The words of the last verse of this song are:

**And Lord haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,**

Even so, it is well with my soul!

This song has been popular for a long time. Many different artists have sung it, changed it, and added to it. If you search YouTube, you'll find tons of versions. If you have time this week, search for different versions of this song and find your favorite. Share the link with the rest of us and others as you can! Here's one version:

A Cappella Hymn - It Is Well With My Soul [3:47]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wy3HWKyBteg>

➤ **This song was written in a time of intense suffering and has comforted suffering people for ages. What can you find to say “it is well with my soul” about during this difficult time? (Answers will vary.)**

The biggest thing we have to be thankful for as Christians is to know that our eternal future is secure. We know that Jesus is returning. We can find comfort in Paul's words to the Thessalonians, knowing that whatever happens in this life, we will spend eternity with the Lord.

Ask your students to participate in an art project using the final verse of *It Is Well with My Soul*. Assign all participants a line of this verse and ask them to create something that represents it. It could be a drawing, a sculpture, a poem, maybe even using artistic fonts to portray their assigned phrase—anything goes. If you have a large number of students, use the chorus and/or have more than one work on a phrase as necessary. Ask your students to take a picture of whatever they create and send it to you. Compile the pictures in order and send them out to everyone. Ask your students to reflect on the words of this song and commit to thanking God daily for the eternal comfort He provides, even in hard times.

If you can, close in prayer together as a group through a video conferencing platform or type out a prayer to share via e-mail or text, asking God to remind you of everything you have to be thankful for and thanking Him for the eternal life He promises us. Ask God to remind you all of the eternal life we have in Him and for help living accordingly. Thank Him for His promise to return.

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