



# Title: Ascension

## Scripture

### Matthew 28:16-20

The eleven disciples went to the hill in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him, even though some of them doubted. Jesus drew near and said to them, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age."

### Reflect: 40 days after His Resurrection

Jesus ascended (went up) into heaven to be with his Father. During those 40 days he had appeared to some of his friends on different occasions, to teach them and prepare them for the time when he would no longer be with them physically. At the time, for Christ's friends and followers this was a time of great worry. They had so much to achieve, Jesus expected so much of them - it was time to 'step up to the plate', but they were really unsure how they'd even begin to do it. Jesus left them with instructions but he knew that his followers couldn't do all that was expected of them alone—they would need help, just as we do. Jesus promised them help in the form of his Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who would come to them at Pentecost. This time of Ascension and Pentecost is a useful reminder that we are never alone ("And I will be with you always"). God is with us always, His Spirit is in all of us, always there to give us strength and courage when we are open to it.

Ascension also gives us hope, because our faith tells us that Christ went to his Father to prepare a place for each of us; the ultimate aim and hope of Christians is to be worthy of a place in heaven.

- What do we mean by 'step up to the plate'?
- In what areas of your life do you need the courage to 'step up to the plate'?

### Prayer to St Julie Billiard

Saint Julie, through your great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, you were miraculously cured and favoured by many graces.

By your powerful intercession, obtain for us above all, a great trust in God in all the difficulties of life, the strength to accomplish in all things the adorable will of God, and the special grace we now ardently ask of you.

"We must have courage in the times we live in. Great souls are needed, souls having the interest of God at heart"



Lord, when you left your friends to take your place with your father they were scared and a little confused. Give comfort to all those who are feeling that way at this time: those who are sick; those worried about work, family, friends, exams; those who don't know where to turn for help. Be with them, Lord, help them to be strengthened by their faith in your love, just as your friends were on the first Ascension Day.

**Amen**

## Prayers

Lord, it's not always easy to stand on our own two feet, we get used to having people to do things for us - remind us to do things, ferry us to-and-fro, prepare our meals, give us revision materials, tell us where we should be... Help us to become less dependent upon others and to act in a more mature and responsible way. **Amen**

Lord Jesus Christ, you returned to the glory of your Father, that you might send us Your Spirit to be with us forever. Help us to feel and know the presence and power of Your Spirit in our lives. **Amen**

## Focus on one each day

### Pray for:

- People for who are lonely or afraid.
- Those who live in places of violence or conflict.
- People who work in the media to use their power wisely and justly
- Those sitting their GCSE and A'Level exams.
- Those preparing to be Confirmed.

### Prayer in action this week:

- Be hopeful and optimistic.
- Be open to new opportunities and experiences.
- 'Step up to the plate'!
- Take responsibility for your words and actions.
- Be brave!

## Ascension

And if I go, while you're still here...  
Know that I live on, vibrating to a different measure behind a thin veil you cannot see through.  
You will not see me, so you must have faith.  
I wait for the time when we can soar together again,  
--both aware of each other.  
Until then, live your life to its fullest.  
And when you need me,  
Just whisper my name in your heart,  
...I will be there.  
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Lord,  
Even if we face hard times and struggle to stand on our own two feet, we know that you are with us, just as your disciples knew that you were with them still – even after you had returned to be with your Father. Help us to remember all this as we journey through this week. **Amen.**

Lord, we ask your blessing upon all those who will sit important examinations this week.  
Give them/us your guidance that they/we may show commitment to their/our studies. Give them/us your comfort that they/we may not feel over burdened by the pressures they/we face.  
Give them/us your peace to know that you are walking with them/us through these difficult times. **Amen**

## Form discussion/reflection

1. Think of a time when you've needed to take a step out on your own...

- Moving up to high school?
- Changing schools?
- Joining a club or group where you didn't know anyone?
- Trying something new for the first time?
- Going on a trip or visit that none of your friends were on?
- Having the courage to do something you wanted to do even though no one else did?

How did you feel when you thought about doing or having to do this?  
How did you feel while you were doing it?  
How did you feel once you'd actually taken the step to do it?

This is how Jesus' friends would have felt when they knew Jesus was going to return to the Father, when they knew he would leave them to work it out without him.  
The promise from Jesus was - as it says in the Sunday Gospel on the front of this sheet - they wouldn't be expected to do it entirely alone, because he would always be with them, he would send his Spirit to them...

2. **Think** of a situation you're facing right now, or know you will soon have to face...one that perhaps frightens or worries you, one that makes you wonder if you can actually do it, one that requires courage, or means you will have to stand out from the crowd or stand on your own two feet...

3. **Write** down the following:

How does this make you feel? Who is there to support you with it? If it feels as though there is no support, who could you perhaps ask to help you to find some support?

4. **Offer this up to God** and ask him for the strength and courage to face the situation/decision:

Do this by placing all your pieces of paper in an envelope/basket/plastic wallet and saying this prayer together:

Lord Jesus, when the time came for you to leave the disciples I'm sure they must have been a little worried; I suppose all they could do was trust that you had prepared them well enough to cope.  
Help me to trust you when I'm a little worried or frightened.  
Help me to know that I am not alone in the situations I face.  
I ask this for myself and those gathered here this afternoon, through your Spirit. **Amen**