



A time of waiting (Acts 1:1-14)

For parents: We are waiting for so much at the moment, when will things get back to normal, what will the 'new normal' look like, when can we see friends and family again? I think it must have been a bit like this for the disciples too, Jesus' death and resurrection had changed everything and then he ascends into heaven and they are left, wondering and waiting for whatever is going to be their 'new normal'. I wonder what we can learn from this as they, and we, wait for Pentecost and the coming of God's Kingdom?

Before you begin: This week we are thinking about waiting! What are some of the things you have to wait for? How many things can you think of?

Watch: <https://youtu.be/tqJ7htvZWRy> for younger children

<https://youtu.be/UcFw8pLBSIo> for older children

Tell the story: you may like to read the story in Acts 1:1-14 or read from a children's Bible. The story of Jesus going up into heaven might be a bit trickier to act out, but I think if you want to make this craft you could then tell the story using small world figures.

You will need a paper or polystyrene cup (or an empty yoghurt pot or flower pot will do), some paper, string or wool and some cotton wool (or white tissue or kitchen roll) and some glue or sticky tape.

Ask an adult to make a hole in the bottom of the cup and thread the string through the hole. Tie a big knot or a bead onto the end of the string so that it doesn't fall through the hole. Cover the cup with cotton wool or tissue clouds. Draw a picture of Jesus on a small piece of paper which will fit inside the cup or use a small world figure. Cut out the picture and attach it to the other end of the string.



In today's story, Jesus went up to heaven in a cloud. Now if you hold the cup upside down in front of you and pull the knotted/beaded end of the string, Jesus will rise up into the clouds and disappear from view!

Talk about: I wonder what surprises you about this story?

I wonder what you think surprised Jesus' friends the most that day?

Can you remember what Jesus asked his friends to do? Do you think he asks us to do the same? (verses 4 and 8)

Can you remember what Jesus' friends did after this had happened? (verses 12-14)

What does it feel like to wait for something, as the disciples had been told to go and wait for the Holy Spirit to come?

Pray:

Bubble prayers - Take it in turns to blow bubbles (probably best outside!) and invite everyone to 'spot' or watch one particular bubble until it disappears from view. At that moment, invite them to say a silent prayer. If you take it in turns to blow bubbles, you could theme the prayers with one theme per person (you could use some of these: people in hospital, healthcare workers, friends, family, government, countries without such good healthcare, anyone sad, each of you by name, teachers, people in your church...) What or who else do you want to pray for? Talk about watching the bubbles carefully and seeing them disappear. Jesus' first disciples were watching him carefully when he disappeared from sight in the story today.

Spiral prayers - Even though Jesus has ascended to heaven and we cannot see him, he is still with us, he hears us and helps us. Draw round a CD (or plastic plate) and then draw a spiral inside it. Think about things you would like to pray to Jesus about- help, thanks, blessings for others and write or draw them inside the spiral.



Cut the spiral out and thread a piece of string through the top so that you can hold the thread and the spiral will dangle down. The spiral will spin slightly just by virtue of being held, but **grownups** might like to hold them over a bulb or source of heat and then the spiral will spin much more because of the rising of hot air. Even though we can't see the hot air, it is still there, rising up. The movement of the spiral reminds us that, even though we can't see him, Jesus is always with us.

Here's a prayer you might like to say: 'God of glory, whatever we're going through, thank you that we're not alone! Thank you for the huge crowd of faithful people who have followed you and who cheer us on. Help us to be as faithful as them. Help us stick with you, even when it's hard. Help us be as faithful as Jesus who went to the cross for us and is now with you in glory. Amen'

Something extra:

- Thy Kingdom Come - What can we do this week between Ascension Day (last Thursday) and Pentecost (next Sunday) to grow closer to God and help our friends and family to know God better? We can pray like Jesus' friends - 'They all joined together constantly in prayer' Acts 1:14 and we can join in with Thy Kingdom Come, using our Prayer adventure booklets if we have them or listening to the daily podcasts. This video explains the link between our story today and Thy Kingdom Come!

<https://youtu.be/3k3pIwVqisA>

- Into the clouds - Often in the Bible a cloud is a symbol of God being present and of God's glory. It can be scary or awesome and is always mysterious and 'other'. Here we see Jesus going from a very ordinary meal with his disciples to a glorious moment when heaven and earth come close together, as he leaves his friends to go back to be with his Father. We call this day 'Ascension Day', as Jesus 'ascended' or 'went up' in some way - not 'up' into outer space but 'up' towards God the Father.
- Make a DIY cloud - You will need a **grown up**, a glass jar with a lid, four to five ice cubes, warm water and some hairspray/deodorant or similar aerosol spray. Here's how to do it (Let a grown up help if appropriate) - warm your jar up by putting the warm (not boiling) water in it and swirling it around. Drop the ice cubes in and quickly put the lid on. Then squirt a blast of hairspray or deodorant into the jar and put the lid back on as quickly as you can. Watch carefully as you take the lid off and release your cloud! Talk about the science: you need three things to make a cloud - warm, moist air, something to cool it down and something to form the nucleus of a droplet. Usually in a raincloud, the nuclei would be provided by specks of dust, here it's the hairspray.

