

I Am With You Always...

(Mt 28:20)

Ascension Meditation For Children

The following meditation is based on the
Readings for the Ascension

Scripture Focus: Matthew 28:16 –20, Mark 16: 15 –20, Acts 1: 1-11,
Ephesians 4: 1-16

Sacred Space: Candle, lectionary opened at one of the above texts

Preparation For the Meditation: When all are settled, light the candle and using the scripture references above, *tell the children the story of Jesus' Ascension*. Reflect with them on the mystery of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, highlighting how it is in love that we experience Jesus' life with us. Invite them to talk about how they know Jesus is with them; the signs of his life with us.

Hymns During the Meditation:

For Little Children -

Oh How It's Good (Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings)

I Have A Song (Monica Brown – God Delights In You)

Hello My God (Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings)

For Older Children-

Open My Eyes (Manibusan – As One Voice/Vol1)

God of Our Journey (Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings)

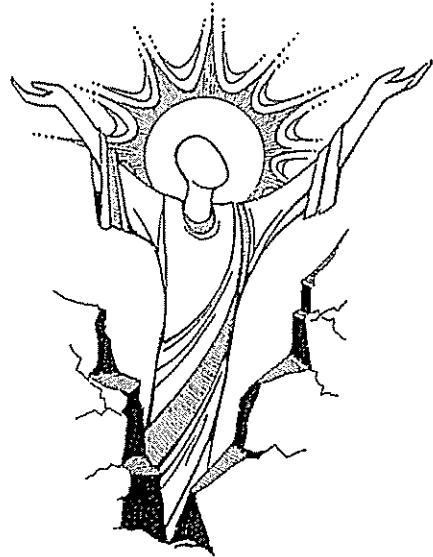
Meditation: (This will need to be modified in part for younger children)

Having attended to the preparation of this quiet time and meditation (See notes in Meditation Page on this site), when the children are settled and still, gradually bring up the quiet reflective music to a suitable level. After a few minutes, invite them to become aware of their own breathing. Direct them to breathe deeply into the centre of their being – to place their hands on their abdomen and feel the swelling of their breath, visualizing it as it circles their whole body, moving down to their toes, back up through their lungs and right through to the tip of their heads. Invite them to find a rhythm in their breathing and to settle in it. When the time is right, fade down the instrumental music and in a tender, reflective tone, invite them to imagine Jesus saying these words to them, *'I am with you always...'*(Mt 28:20). Give them a minute or two with that and repeat it again, this time inviting them to hear Jesus name them as he says, *'I am with you always...'* Leave them with this and when you feel the time is right, fade out the reflective music and play one of the hymns suggested above. When the hymn ends, bring the meditation to closure in the usual manner. (See Meditation Page on this site).

Children Scripture Reflection

The Feast of The Ascension

I Am With You Always



Artwork by Dorothy Woodward rsj

Scripture Focus “I Am With You Always” Matthew 28: 20

Having attended to the preparation of this quiet time (see notes on meditation page), when the children are settled and still, begin playing the *instrumental music* of the mantra *I Am With You Always – Children’s Edition* (Monica Brown – I Am With You Always- Track 2 Instrumental). After a minute or so, proclaim in a reflective and intimate manner the text, “*I Am with you always*” (Mt 28:20). After a moment or two repeat the phrase again, a little slower. Let the music play on for a further moment or two and then read the following reflection in a tender and reflective manner. (Note that the dots... below indicate a brief pause). As this reflection begins, fade the instrumental music out.

Reflection:

God’s Word to you today is a promise from Jesus, to be with you forever... That is a very big thing to promise! Sometimes people make promises to us, but for whatever reason, they can’t keep their promise... But the promise Jesus makes to you today will never be broken..., because the Spirit of Jesus is already deep in your heart..., and will always be there. Nothing and no-one can ever take Jesus’ Spirit from you... One way of knowing that Jesus is with you, is by being quiet and still, and letting yourself feel the warmth and peace of His Spirit in your heart.... Jesus’ Spirit is also with you in the love and care you receive from others, and in the beauty and glory of creation.

After a brief pause begin playing the instrumental music again and let it play on for a minute or so before continuing with the following meditative ritual. Once you begin the ritual, fade the music out and set the CD player on to track 1 of the mantra – the vocal version and pause it there.

Ritual:

Let you body relax and be still, quieten your mind and close your eyes... (Allow a moment or two for this) **Gently place your hand upon your heart...** Imagine Jesus whispering his promise to you now..., *“I am with you always...”*, Image him whispering your name and those words to you now... (Allow a moment or two) **Using your index finger, slowly and deliberately, with your eyes still closed, write Jesus’ words, “I Am with you always” across your heart...** Begin playing the vocal version of the mantra here, track 1. *(Be aware that this vocal version begins with a fairly lengthy instrumental introduction before the vocal comes in, so just let the track play through that introduction).* After a minute or so fade the music down a little and simply say, **Rest now in the warmth of Jesus’ love for you...** Bring the music back up and let the mantra play on to its end. When it has ended, after a suitable pause direct the children to open their eyes and to sit up. If time allows give them a chance to journal or draw something of what they are feeling. You may wish to sing an appropriate song or hymn together by way of bringing this reflective time to closure.

(Please note, your familiarity with both the instrumental and vocal versions of the mantra will help you create a prayerful flow for this reflection and meditative ritual.)

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Pentecost

gathering

Sit in stillness and breathe deeply. Listen to your own breath coming into your body and leaving your body.

Breathe in life; breathe out hope. Gaze on the image and words. How do they resonate with you in this moment?

Divine Spirit of Wisdom and Goodness, enlighten my mind, penetrate its blindness. Make me in all things what I ought to be.

Mary Mackillop, 1877.

context

Our reading from the book of Wisdom describes the Spirit of God as active, effective, sustaining and encouraging. The reading begins by calling the Spirit, 'kindly', one of God's wonderful characteristics.

listening

Wisdom of Solomon 1: 6; 7: 22; 8: 1

Wisdom is the kindly Spirit.

She is intelligent, holy, unique and unmistakable:
Subtle, dynamic, perceptive, pristine, unclouded,
Unconquerable, compassionate, shrewd, compelling,
Generous and loving towards mortals, faithful,
Faultless, serene, directing all, knowing all,
All pervading, ever intelligent, pure and most subtle spirit.
She is the breath of the power of God,
A pure light of the glory of the Most High....
She is the light that shines forth from everlasting light,
The flawless mirror of the dynamism of God

And the perfect image of the Holy One's goodness....
She enters into holy souls
And makes them friends of God and prophets,
For God loves the one
Who finds a home in Wisdom...
She stretches forth Her power
From one end of the earth to the other
And gently puts all things in their proper place.

breaking open

What surprises and encourages me in this reading?

Take time to reflect and share with each other.

responding

Spirit of God, come weave your dreams
In marrow, joints and in between
And sew them in my heart.

Come, fathermother of the poor,
My endless, overflowing store,
The source of all love's arts.

You are my comfort unsurpassed,
Contentment, as when home at last,
Refreshment when I thirst.

When I'm burdened, you are rest,
Keen to give at my request
An energetic burst.

Share with me Christ's consciousness
In whatever wilderness,
Send me, aim me true.

When I'm dull and unaware,
When I miss the mark, be there,
Guide my way anew.

In my soul's most hidden reach,
There you breathe and there you teach,
Dark but flaming night.

In the garb of everyday
There you weave your gentle way:
Jesus' mind and sight.

Bound by racing time and space
Human mind cannot keep pace;
In loving awe I bow.

Absolute, you are beyond me
Yet you're in me, fiercely, fondly;
Silent, you surround.

Susan Connelly rsj. Used with permission.

blessing

*May the abundant Spirit of generous radiance
flow through, over, beneath
and above our world and our hearts
May the dancing Spirit's infectious love
swirl us into joy and freedom*

*May the gentle Spirit of warm hospitality
spread welcome and healing in every corner of our being.*

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They still had their eyes fixed on the sky as he went away, when two men dressed in white suddenly stood beside them and said, "Galileans, why are you standing their looking up at the sky? This Jesus, who was taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way that you saw him go to heaven."

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 47:1-6.

Response: **Jesus has gone up to heaven.**

Clap your hands for joy, all peoples!

Praise God with loud songs!

The Lord, the Most High, is to be feared;

he is a great king, ruling over all the world. **R.**

He gave us victory over the peoples;

he made us rule over the nations.

He chose for us the land where we live,

the proud possession of his people, whom he loves. **R.**

God goes up to his throne.

There are shouts of joy and the blast of trumpets,

as the Lord goes up.

Sing praise to God; sing praise to our king! **R.**

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia!

"Go and teach all people my Gospel."

Alleluia!

Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20 (*Even though Jesus has gone the apostles carry on his work*).

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

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: baptise 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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

17 PENTECOST

First Reading: Acts 2:1-4 (*The coming of the Holy Spirit*).

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When the day of Pentecost came, all the believers were gathered together in one place. Suddenly there was a noise from the sky which sounded like a strong wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire which spread out and touched each person there. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak.

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 104:1-2a, 24, 29-31.

Response: **The Lord sends us the Holy Spirit.**

Praise the Lord, my soul!

O Lord, my God, how great you are!

You are clothed with majesty and glory;

you cover yourself with light. **R.**

Lord, you have made so many things!

How wisely you made them all!

The earth is filled with your creatures. **R.**

When you turn away, they are afraid;

when you take away your breath, they die

and go back to the dust from which they came. **R.**

But when you give them breath, they are created;

you give new life to the earth.

May the glory of the Lord last for ever!

May the Lord be happy with what he has made! **R.**

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia!

The spirit of the Lord is with us.

Alleluia!

Gospel: John 20:19-23 (*Jesus breathes his spirit into his apostles*).

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

It was late that Sunday evening, and the disciples were gathered together behind locked doors, because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities. Then Jesus came and stood among them. "Peace be with you," he said. After saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord.

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive people's sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."
The Gospel of the Lord.

18. THE TRINITY

First Reading: Romans 8:14-17 (*We belong to the Trinity*).

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans
Those who are led by God's Spirit are God's children. For the Spirit that God has given you does not make you slaves and cause you to be afraid; instead, the Spirit makes you God's children, and by the Spirit's power we cry out to God, "Father! my Father!" God's Spirit joins himself to our spirits to declare that we are God's children. Since we are his children, we will possess the blessings he keeps for his people, and we will also possess with Christ what God has kept for him; for if we share Christ's suffering, we will also share his glory.

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 33:13-15, 20-22.

Response: *We are God's people.*

The Lord looks down from heaven and sees all mankind.
From where he rules, he looks down on all who live on earth.
He forms all their thoughts and knows everything they do. *R.*

We put our hope in the Lord;
he is our protector and our help.
We are glad because of him; we trust in his holy name.
May your constant love be with us, Lord,
as we put our hope in you. *R.*

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia!
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
Alleluia!

Gospel: John 16:12-15 (*Jesus will send the Holy Spirit to help us to the Father*).

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to his friends, "I have much more to tell you, but now it would be too much for you to bear. When, however, the Spirit, comes, who reveals the truth

about God, he will lead you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own authority, but he will speak of what he hears, and will tell you of things to come. He will give me glory, because he will take what I say and tell it to you. All that my Father has is mine; that is why I said that the Spirit will take what I give him and tell it to you."

The Gospel of the Lord.

19. THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

First Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

(*There is one bread and one cup of salvation*).

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

The cup we use in the Lord's Supper and for which we give thanks to God: when we drink from it, we are sharing in the blood of Christ. And the bread we break: when we eat it, we are sharing in the body of Christ. Because there is the one loaf of bread, all of us, though many, are one body, for we all share the same loaf.

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 116:1-2, 12-14, 17.

Response: *I will call on the Lord's name.*

I love the Lord, because he hears me;
he listens to my prayers.

He listens to me every time I call to him. *R.*

What can I offer the Lord for all his goodness to me?
I will bring a wine offering to the Lord,
to thank him for saving me.

In the assembly of all his people I will give him what I have promised. *R.*

I will give you a sacrifice of thanksgiving
and offer my prayer to you. *R.*

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia!
Jesus feeds us with his body and blood.
Alleluia!

Gospel: Mark 14:22-26 (*The Last Supper*).

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

While they were eating, Jesus took a piece of bread, gave a prayer of thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. "Take it," he said, "this is my body."

17. PENTECOST

Theme

The Holy Spirit helps us to carry on the work of Jesus and he gives us new life.

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading: Acts 2: 1-4 (*The coming of the Holy Spirit*).

Response: The Lord sends us the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 104: 1-2a, 24, 29-31.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia!

The Spirit of the Lord is with us.

Alleluia!

Gospel: John 20: 19-23 (*Jesus breathes his Spirit into his apostles*).

Homily Notes

- The coming of the Holy Spirit gave life to the frightened disciples.
- They went out to tell others about Jesus.
- Jesus had given them his power to help us and the Holy Spirit shows them how to spread the Good News.
- The Church is alive in the Spirit.
- This event is like the birthday of the Church.

General Intercessions

1. That our Church will be guided by the Holy Spirit. Lord, hear us.
2. That all Christians will live in peace united in the Holy Spirit. Lord, hear us.

Notes on the Celebration

- Children can make the shape of a flame with their name on it. These can be arranged in the shape of a dove.
- Water and light can be used as symbols of birth.
- The birthday of the Church can be highlighted with the usual birthday celebration conventions, balloons, decorations and a party afterwards.
- The Solemn Blessing and Dismissal can be emphasised.

PENITENTIAL RITE

Lord, you are with the Father.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, you send us the Holy Spirit.
Christ, have mercy.

Lord, you give us new life.
Lord, have mercy.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Lord, you send your Spirit to spread the Good News. May we who receive the spirit be living witness to his power. We ask this through Christ the Lord.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

Introduction

The Holy Spirit helps us to pray to our Father who will listen to these prayers which we now make.

Concluding Prayer

Father, today we celebrate the beginning of the Church. Hear our prayers and may we continue to grow in faith and love.

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Lord, may the Holy Spirit transform our gifts that they may become for us Jesus our risen Lord. We ask this through Christ the Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray:

Father, this Holy Communion helps us to grow. Protect us as we continue the work of Jesus, who is Lord for ever and ever.

DISMISSAL

(Emphasise the theme of mission as a response to the coming of the Holy Spirit.)
As we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit, may we go out in peace to all the world to continue the work of Jesus. Alleluia, alleluia!