

The Ascension of the Lord Cycle A

Readings & Background on the Gospel Reading

Family Connection

Today's Readings

First Reading - *Acts of the Apostles 1:1-11*

Jesus is taken up to heaven in the presence of the apostles.

Responsorial Psalm - *Psalms 47:2-3,6-9*

Sing praise to God as he mounts his throne.

Second Reading - *Ephesians 1:17-23*

God raised Jesus from the dead and seated him at his right hand.

Gospel Reading - *Matthew 28:16-20*

Jesus charges his disciples to make disciples of all nations and promises to be with them forever.

Today's Gospel is taken **from the conclusion of the Gospel of Matthew**. Matthew's Gospel quickly moves from the disciples' discovery of Jesus' empty tomb, to Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, to the commission that Jesus gives his disciples in today's Gospel.

The Final Commission, as this Gospel is sometimes called, is given on the mountain top. **Throughout Scripture, the most important events happen on the mountaintop**, and Matthew has used this motif throughout his Gospel. Earlier in Matthew's Gospel, Peter, James, and John had seen Jesus transfigured on the mountaintop ([Matthew 17:1-8](#)). Also in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus taught the crowds from the mountaintop in what we now call the Sermon on the Mount.

Here we are told that the **eleven disciples go the mountaintop** in Galilee, as Jesus had instructed through Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (cf. [Matthew 28:9-10](#)). They see Jesus, and both worship and doubt at the same time. **Jesus approaches them and commissions them to baptize and teach, "to make disciples of all nations."**

It is a task which Jesus had previously prepared his disciples for; **recall that Jesus had sent the twelve apostles to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal** (cf. [Matthew 10:1-15](#)).

However, earlier the Twelve were sent only to the House of Israel; in this Final Commission, the eleven are told **to go to "all nations."** **The mission of Jesus is now to be taken to all people; the task now is to baptize and to teach.**

Jesus commissions his **disciples to baptize in the name of the Trinity**, one of the clearest attestations found in Scripture for baptism in the name of the Trinity.

In the Acts of the Apostles and in the Letters of Paul, **baptism is more frequently offered "in the name of Jesus."**

The ending of Matthew's Gospel can be understood as the beginning of the Church. Jesus commissions **his disciples to continue to teach in his name and to bring others into the community of disciples through baptism.**

The Gospel ends, as it had begun, with **the promise that Jesus will continue to be Emmanuel, "God with us"** (cf. [Matthew 1:23](#)), **for all eternity.**

The Ascension of the Lord, Cycle A Family Connection

Gospel Reading Matthew 28:16-20

Jesus charges his disciples to make disciples of all nations and promises to be with them forever.

Just as Jesus sent his disciples to make disciples, **our family, the domestic Church**, is called to bear witness to the life of discipleship.

That act of witnessing can take many forms. **First and foremost our family should call people to discipleship by the example of our love for one another.** That example is only the beginning; **our love must extend beyond the family, reaching out to others and to the world.**

Together with your family, identify one or more ways in which your family lives the life of Christian discipleship. *Thank God for the blessing of the opportunity to be able to show God's love.*

Then read together today's Gospel, Matthew 28:16-20.

Discuss what Jesus sends his disciples to do.

Work together to identify one or more ways in which your family would like to do a better job bearing witness to the life of discipleship.

Choose one of those ways and work together to make it happen.

Pray as a family for the grace to be witnesses to the world of the life of discipleship.

Pray together the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father
IN HEAVEN
may your name
be kept holy
May your Kingdom
come soon
May your will be done
on Earth
as it is in
heaven
Give us today
the food we need
and forgive us
our sins, as we
have forgiven
those who sin against us.
And don't let us yield
TO TEMPTATION
but rescue us
from the evil one.
