



Up, up and away!

After appearing to his friends lots of times, it's time for Jesus to leave...

Activity time

Try these activities and see if you can start guessing what might happen in our story today. If you can't get exactly these materials, just see what you can find around the house instead!

1 DIY cloud



You will need: a glass jar with a lid; four to five ice cubes; warm water; hairspray/deodorant or similar aerosol spray

Make a mini cloud! Warm your jar up by putting the warm (not boiling) water in it and swirling it around. (Let an adult help if appropriate.) Drop the ice cubes in and quickly put the lid on. Then squirt a blast of hairspray or deodorant into the jar and clap the lid back on as quickly as you can. Watch carefully as you take the lid off and release your cloudy pillar!

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. Talk as well about stories in the Bible where God's glory is shown in a cloud – perhaps the most famous one is when God guides the people through the

desert by having them follow the pillar of cloud by day (Exodus 13). In today's story, a cloud takes Jesus away from the disciples.

2 Bubble prayers

You will need: bubble mixture; blowers

Ideally do this outside. Take it in turns to blow bubbles 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. They might think of their own theme, or 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.

3 Chapter one

You will need: paper; coloured pens or pencils, or paints and brushes

At the top of your paper, write 'Chapter 1'. Read carefully what Luke says happened when Jesus left his friends for the last time ([Acts 1:6-9](#)). They'd just been having a meal together, they'd gone out to the Mount of Olives outside Jerusalem and were gathered together, asking Jesus about whether THIS was the time for him to be the sort of king they were still expecting him to be, when he gives them a new job and... leaves them. Imagine you're one of the disciples on the Mount of Olives with Jesus. Try to draw the scene from your point of view for chapter 1 of the book of Acts.

Talk about: Hang on! This is chapter 1, and Jesus is *leaving*? Shouldn't this be the *last* chapter of the book, instead of the first? Jesus had to leave so that even more exciting things could happen to bring an even more exciting kingdom on earth. (But you might want to check out the end of the last chapter of the gospel of Luke too!)

Celebration

Sing your favourite Messy Church song.

Read [Acts 1:1-11](#).

[For interest: 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.]

- What do you think surprised the disciples the most that day?
- Do you think the disciples understood what was going on?
- Why do you think neither Jesus nor the disciples seem to be sad about leaving each other?
- How do you see God's glory in the world today?

How glorious for Jesus to know that he was going to be back with his Father in glory and that he could bring heaven to earth and earth to heaven in a new and glorious way. (Watch out for the next chapter of the story to find out how that happens at Pentecost next week!)

Pray together: Here's a prayer to say, adapted from the letter to the Hebrews 12:

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

You could say the [Lord's Prayer](#) and the [Messy Grace](#).

Mealttime

Can you make something to eat that has to **rise**? Perhaps a cake in the microwave, some homemade bread or, if you feel really adventurous, a soufflé...