

ACTIVITIES FOR CHURCH SCHOOL AND HOME April 2012

Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America

Here are four activities from the Department of Christian Education, focusing on the Feast of the Ascension of Christ, and also reviewing Pascha and the post-Resurrection appearances of Our Lord.

The activities may be suitable for several age groups, so look them over and decide which are best for your students. Then print out all the pages, or the ones you decide to use. Have a copy for each student.

“Teacher Notes” with answers to questions and suggestions for discussion follow the activity pages.

Biblical references are to the Revised Standard Version. Be sure to have Bibles for students to use. For younger students, you may want to use the story of the Ascension written by Mrs. Sophie Koulomzin and entitled “Jesus Christ Goes Back to Heaven.” Find it in the Resources “Stories” section of the DCE website.

Similar activities for Pentecost, produced by the Department last year, are available in the “Resources” section of the Department website (dce.oca.org). Go to “Resources” at the top of the page, then within that section go to “Activities.” You will find “Pentecost Activities” on the third page. Craft suggestions are also included.

Activity One

Who Am I?

Write the name of each person described in the following sentences. Choose your answer from the list of names below.

1. I am the person to whom Saint Luke addressed the Book of Acts. Who am I?
2. I said I would not believe in Jesus' resurrection unless I placed my finger in the print of the nails. Who am I?
3. I asked Pontius Pilate for Jesus' dead body, and then buried it respectfully. Who am I?
4. The soldiers made me carry Jesus' cross. Who am I?
5. After the soldiers seized and bound Jesus, they brought Him to me, the high priest. Who am I?
6. I said to the prisoner Jesus, "Do you not know that I have power to crucify you or release you?" Who am I?

Names: Simon of Cyrene, Pontius Pilate, Theophilus, Thomas, Caiaphas, Joseph.

Activity Two

Scrambled Words

These sentences are all about Jesus' appearances to His followers after His Resurrection. Each sentence needs a word to complete it. Look up the Bible passage for each sentence and find the missing word. Then find that word in the list that follows. It's there, but it's scrambled. Unscramble it, and then put it in the sentence.

1. One morning after His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples and invited them to have _____. (John 21: 12)
2. The risen Christ, meeting Mary at His tomb, asked her, "Woman, why are you _____." (John 20: 15)
3. Two apostles saw Jesus as they were walking into the _____. (Mk. 16: 12)
4. Drawing near to two of His apostles who were walking on the road, Jesus asked them, "What is this _____ you are holding as you walk?" (Lk. 24: 17)
5. The risen Jesus asked His gathered disciples, who thought He might be a ghost, "Why are you _____, and why do questionings rise in your hearts?" (Lk 24:38)
6. The women at the tomb encountered an angel whose appearance was like _____. (Mt. 28: 3)

Words:

a. EPENGWI

b. TAFSEBKRA

c. VATNNOICOSRE

d. RELDOBTU

e. HINTGNIGL

f. TONRUCY

Activity Three

Words in Order

Put the words of the first line of the Troparion for the Feast of the Ascension in the correct order:

GLORY YOU ASCENDED O IN GOD HAVE CHRIST

Activity Four

The Kontakion of the Feast

Take a closer look at the Kontakion for the Feast of the Ascension by discussing the questions that follow the text, below.

When You had fulfilled the dispensation for our sake, and united earth to heaven

You ascended in glory, O Christ our God,

not being parted from those who love You,

but remaining with them and crying:

“I am with you and no one will be against you.”

Questions:

1. What does the word “dispensation” mean?
2. How did Christ “unite earth to heaven “?
3. What do the words “no one will be against you” mean?

Teacher Notes

***Activity One**

Here are the answers in order, with Biblical references for each, so that students can look them up.

1. Theophilus (Acts 1: 1) 2. Apostle Thomas (John 20: 24-25)

3. Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57-59). It may be useful to remind students that there are several important Josephs in Scripture: the Old Testament Joseph with his “coat of many colors”, the human husband of Mary who helped raise Jesus, and the devout Joseph of Arimathea who risked asking for the body of Christ.

4. Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15: 21) 5. Caiaphas (Matthew 26: 57)

6. Pontius Pilate (John 19: 10)

***Activity Two**

The scrambled words (and the numbered sentence they complete) are as follows:

- a. weeping (2) b. breakfast (1) c. conversation (4) d. troubled (5) e. lightning (6)
- f. country (3)

***Activity Three**

The words of the Troparion in order are: O CHRIST GOD, YOU HAVE ASCENDED IN GLORY.

***Activity Four**

This Kontakion is rich in meaning, so it's a good one to talk about.

Question 1: God's “dispensation” is His divine plan for our salvation, which Christ fulfilled by coming among us, dying and rising so that we could have eternal life in the Kingdom with Him.

Question 2: Christ united earth to heaven by overcoming death. Now we have the eternal life that is heavenly, rather than the finite earthly life which was the only one we had before.

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Question 3: These words don't mean that we will never have adversaries, but that they will never prevail against us. The sentence "I am with you and no one will be against you" might be a good one for students to memorize.