

# The Ascension of Christ (Acts 1:1-11)

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**Guidelines:** Protect confidentiality and follow the leader's prompts.

**Ignatian Meditation Process:** Ignatius chose this Gospel story for Week 4 of *The Spiritual Exercises*. Read the introduction and then “ask for the grace.” Then quietly read the passage by using your imagination to enter into the story, sensing and feeling what's going on. Don't analyze the passage or seek insights — *experience yourself as a character in the story*. After the second reading have a “colloquy” (short, personal conversation) with the Lord. You can use the prompts and questions at the bottom to guide your prayer time and journaling (and sharing with others).

**Introduction:** After Jesus rose from the dead for forty he appeared many times to his followers, not as a ghost, but as a flesh and bones living human being. During this period he alternated between speaking to his apostles in the flesh and in the Spirit. He was teaching them to hear his voice and rely on his presence spiritually, without him being physically present (see Acts 1:1-3 in a literal translation). Just before he ascended into the heavens he told them to wait for a soon to come immersion in Holy Spirit presence and power. Ten days later on Pentecost God sent this joyful and empowering outpouring of his Spirit.

**Ask For the Grace:** Dear Father, I ask for the grace I desire: to be glad and to rejoice intensely because of the great glory and joy of Christ our Lord.

## Imagine Yourself in the Gospel: Acts 1 (MSG)

1-5 Dear Theophilus, in the first volume of this book I wrote on everything that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he said good-bye to the apostles, the ones he had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and was taken up to heaven. After his death, he presented himself alive to them in many different settings over a period of forty days. In face-to-face meetings, he talked to them about things concerning the kingdom of God. As they met and ate meals together, he told them that they were on no account to leave Jerusalem but “must wait for what the Father promised: the promise you heard from me. John baptized in water; you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit. And soon.”

6 When they were together for the last time they asked, “Master, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now? Is this the time?”

7-8 He told them, “You don't get to know the time. Timing is the Father's business. What you'll get is the Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit comes on you, you will be able to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, all over Judea and Samaria, even to the ends of the world.”

9-11 These were his last words. As they watched, he was taken up and disappeared in a cloud. They stood there, staring into the empty sky. Suddenly two men appeared—in white robes! They said, “You Galileans!—why do you just stand here looking up at an empty sky? This very Jesus who was taken up from among you to heaven will come as certainly—and mysteriously—as he left.”

**1st Reading:** Visualize yourself in the Gospel story. Don't seek intellectual insights — stay with the imagery. Use your senses to see, touch, feel, and hear. What part of the story are you drawn to? Which character do you identify with? Or are you a bystander?

**2nd Reading:** Experience the story in the role of the character God led you to. Then talk with the Lord. What do you feel? How does this relate to something in your life today? What is God saying to you?