

## 7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)

**Lesson Plan:** Jesus' Ascension and Great Commission

**Learning Goals:** Students should assess the importance of Jesus' Great Commission to the life of believers today.

**Question:** How do you make a disciple?

Prayer

Discuss Question on Board

**Read Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:49-53**

### Great Commission

- Doubt
  - What would it take for you to believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead? (These disciples were seeing him in the flesh and still some of them doubted.)
  - Maybe it should ease our anxiety when there are times that people doubt our message.
- Authority
  - Power is dangerous thing - it can cause people to do things and say things that they might never say in other circumstances. Power has a tendency to corrupt.
  - Jesus is saying to the disciples that their power comes from Jesus, who demonstrates a different kind of relationship to power.
  - "The authority they share . . . is not a dominating lordship, not the kind of authority demonstrated by the Roman state when it crucified Jesus. In going to the cross, Jesus refused to exercise such coercive authority. Instead, here on the mountain he offers an alternative vision of power: an authority that seeks 'all nations,' calling all people to a new way of living."
- Disciples, no merely converts
  - The sense of this command is not to set and go somewhere special or unique that you were never planning on going. Rather, the idea is along the lines of "as you go" (as you do what you were going to do anyway, do it with purpose - making disciples for Christ).
  - Jesus isn't just telling the disciples to go out and make believers, it's more than that. He is calling them to make disciples.
  - Not only should followers of Jesus believe that he is the Messiah, the Son of God, the should obey everything that Jesus commanded. (In other words, "Be reconciled to one another. Love your enemies. Do not retaliate against evil. Pray, fast, and give alms, but not in a way that draws attention to yourself. Deny yourself. Above all, love God and love your neighbor. This is the kind of authority Jesus claims.")

-Martha Moore-Keish, *Feasting on the Gospels: Matthew*, Vol. 2, p. 370
- Baptism
  - Baptism marked the initiation of new believers into the community of Jesus Followers. It was a way of publicly committing oneself to this new way of life.
  - We see here one of the first Trinitarian formulas in scripture. (Baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - not three gods but one God in three persons.)
- Jesus' Presence
  - Even though Jesus is going away, he isn't going to abandon his followers.
  - It is an echo of Deuteronomy 31:6 where God promises not to leave the Israelites or forsake them. Jesus does the same here.

**Ascension**

- Jesus walked on the earth for 40 days after his resurrection
- Jesus was taken back to heaven (he ascended, or “went up”)
- The disciples went back to Jerusalem, where they waited until the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them (see Acts 2)
- We also wait in expectation for the return of Christ

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**Lesson Summary/Review:**

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- Great Commission
- Ascension
- What does it mean to make disciples?