

# Welcome to a Year of Celebration!

**Week 21: May 22-28, 2022**

## **Celebrate Ascension Day**

This year, we are focusing on who God is and how we can celebrate him and the life that he offers to us. We will draw deeper into a relationship with the Lord through examining his nature and desire for personal intimacy with us as his people, and we are going to do so in such a fun way! We are going to journey in 2022 through practical ways to celebrate various holidays! We will look at many of your favorite celebrations: Christmas, Easter, Valentine's Day and much more. We will explore the historic, liturgical holidays of the year, learn about the Jewish festivals of the Bible days, and even consider some of the celebrations of other religious faiths. I'm so glad you will be on this journey with us.

In this packet, you will find some ideas for you to grow closer to God, your family, and others. Nothing is required. It is all for fun and your personal enjoyment and growth. There are enough activities that you could do one or two per day during the week if you want. If you don't want to do something, skip it. If another idea comes to mind, do it. Watch for God's abundant goodness and celebrate it.

Come Join Us as We  
**CELEBRATE GOD!**



**“They celebrate your abundant goodness  
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.”**

*Dr. Patrick Wilson*

**(Psalm 145:7)**

*2022*



# Video Devotional

Go to Patrick Wilson's YouTube page and watch the video devotional for this week: Celebrate Ascension Day. Then, consider and discuss with your family/friends the following questions:

- Why is Jesus' ascension an important act of God?
- Why do you think the disciples wanted to know when the kingdom would come on earth? Do you share this desire?
- What did Jesus refocus the disciple on doing as the mission of the kingdom?
- Why do you think Paul speaks of the feet, head, and body of Christ?
- In what area of your life do you need God to help you rise up?

## Craft: Ascension Cup

1. Use crayons or markers to color the picture of Jesus found here: <https://www.catholicteacherresources.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/AscendingJesusCraft.pdf>
2. Cut out the picture of Jesus and glue to construction paper.
3. Cut around the glued figure on the construction paper.
4. Glue small pieces of cotton around the base of Jesus.
5. Glue larger pieces of cotton on the outside of the cup.
6. Puncture a small hole in the base of the cup.
7. Thread the yarn through the cup and tie a knot on the end.
8. Tape the opposite end of the yarn to the back of the Jesus figure.
9. As you pull the yarn, Jesus ascends into the clouds.

### Supplies:

- Jesus printable
- One plastic cup (blue)
- Construction paper (blue, yellow, white)
- Cotton balls
- Scissors
- White glue or glue stick
- Clear tape
- Marker, pen, or crayons
- Yarn (18 inches)



# Foods to Prepare

Ascension Day is considered a “feast day” in Catholicism. Instead of fasting, feasting is encouraged. It is a celebratory day of Jesus’ victory over sin, death, the grave, and the world. As such, many celebrate by having a picnic on the top of a hill.

Catholic Cuisine explains, “What would the menu for an Ascension picnic include? There is not a set menu, but it is traditional to eat a bird of some sort (pigeon, pheasant, duck) since Jesus ‘flew’ to heaven. In our culture chicken or turkey might be more common and available even though they are not known for their flight abilities.”

Fruits are also a common staple on an ascension picnic, representing Jesus as the “first fruit” of the ascension of all people. As a beverage, it is common to use something that has carbonation (i.e., sparkling water, soda, sparkling cider), which illustrates the ascension.

If possible, find time to picnic with family and/or friends on or near Ascension Day (May 26th), which occurs 40 days after Easter. Spend this time contemplating or discussing the importance of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

## Chutes and Ladders

What better way to commemorate the holiday of Jesus “going up” to heaven than to play Chutes and Ladders! If you have the game, pull it out and play it with family and friends. If you don’t own the game, consider playing a travel-themed game like one of these:

- Ticket to Ride
- Forbidden Island
- Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego
- Trekking the National Parks
- Guess in 10: Cities Around the World
- Passport to Culture



# Movies to Watch

If you are movie fan, pick out a favorite movie to watch alone or with family/friends. Here are some of the movies that speak about the afterlife (most of which are not biblically based), but you certainly are not limited to this list. Pop some popcorn, curl up on the couch, and enjoy the show!

## Afterlife Movies:

- What Dreams May Come
- Ghost
- Soul
- Flatliners
- Book of Life
- The Sixth Sense
- Beetlejuice
- Always
- City of Angels
- A Guy Named Joe
- All Dogs Go to Heaven
- Haunted Mansion
- Heaven Can Wait
- Coco

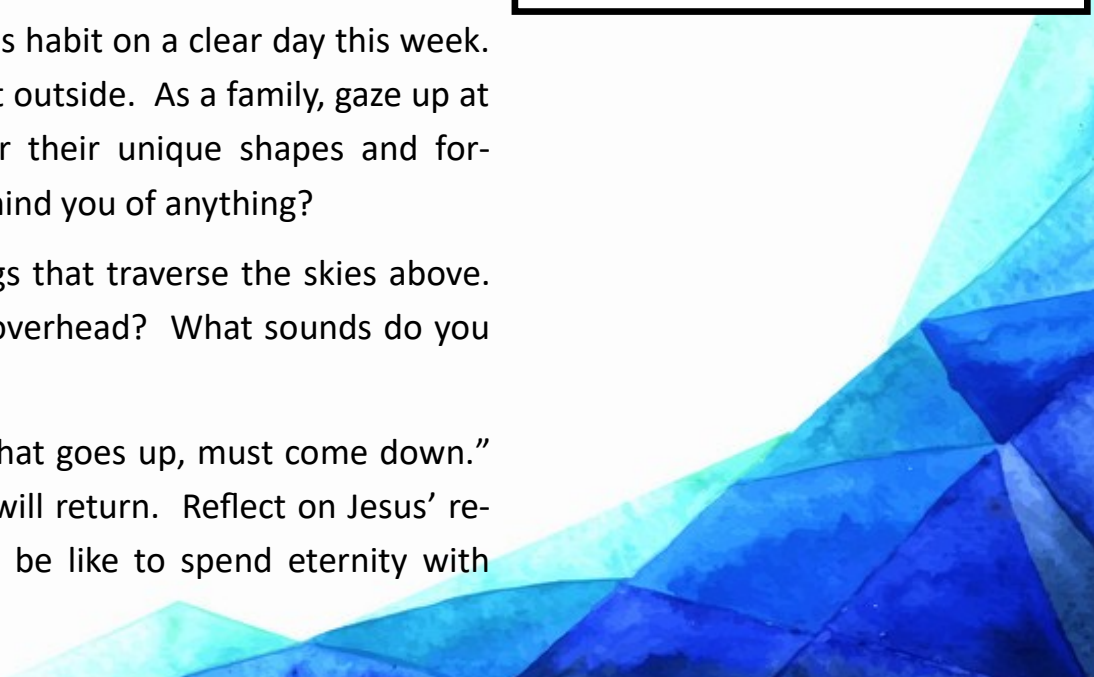
## Cloud Watching

Perhaps as a kid, you used to lay on your back and look up at the sky. You watched the clouds stroll across the heavens, and you looked for the depictions of object or people in the cloud formations.

As we grow up, we tend to look down more than we look up. So, break this habit on a clear day this week. Take a blanket or quilt outside. As a family, gaze up at the clouds. Consider their unique shapes and formations. Do they remind you of anything?

Watch for other things that traverse the skies above. Do you see birds fly overhead? What sounds do you hear?

There is a saying: “What goes up, must come down.” Just as Jesus left, he will return. Reflect on Jesus’ return and what it will be like to spend eternity with him.





# Bible Study

“No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him” (John 3:13-15)

Jesus frequently referred to himself as the “Son of Man” to identify with us as human beings. Yet, Jesus is distinctive from other people. One way that Jesus is unique is that he has gone into the heavens.

Jews typically referred to three levels of heaven: 1) the daytime sky, 2) the nighttime sky, and 3) the dwelling place of God. Jesus is speaking of the last, when he refers to himself having come from and gone to heaven. Only God comes and goes from heaven.

Jesus then references the account of Numbers 21 when Moses made a serpent out of bronze. Everyone who looked with faith in God to the bronze serpent was healed from the venomous snake bites. In similar fashion, Jesus speaks about our need for salvation from the deadly “bite” of sin. Jesus was lifted up on the cross. All who put their faith in Jesus and his death on the cross for our failures will find life that is eternal with God in heaven. What an amazing and undeserved gift from God!

## Prayer Time

Consider this prayer by Our Catholic Prayers:

“Dear Lord Jesus Christ,

“Right before your Ascension into heaven you told your apostles to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth upon receiving the Holy Spirit. May I be similarly inspired to spread your Gospel message in word and deed, according to your will for me. And may I do so prudently and joyfully, with your help, your guidance, and your grace! And remembering this glorious event, help me to seek what is above, Heaven, where you are seated at the right hand of God the Father! Amen.”

Spend some time praying for those that you know who need Jesus.

Perhaps it is for those who have never come to him.

Perhaps it is for those who need to renew faith.

Thank God for his Spirit with you.



# Service: C.A.S.A. Volunteer

Ascension Day focuses on Jesus departing from this broken world to heaven. Sadly, there are many in our communities that remain in very broken family circumstances and need assistance. One way that you can help others “rise” from their situation is to become an C.A.S.A. volunteer.

C.A.S.A. stands for “Court Appointed Special Advocate.” CASA volunteers are everyday people who are committed to making a difference for children who might otherwise slip through the cracks of our overburdened foster care system. They are appointed by the local judge to engage with and advocate for the welfare of children as they progress through the system. Volunteers research case records, connect with each person involved in the child’s life (i.e., family members, teachers, doctors, lawyers, and social workers). They monitor the progress and safety of the child and his/her family throughout the case and share their observations with the court. Their independent evaluations aid the court to make more informed decisions on the wellness of the child and his/her environment.

To learn more about being a C.A.S.A. volunteer, research the nearest C.A.S.A. volunteer center in your county or state or reach out to someone you know that is involved in this ministry.

## Connect: How High Can You Go?

When we reflect on the ascension of Jesus, we are reminded of him ascending into the heights of the clouds to heaven. Gather your family and see what the highest place you can go together. Here are a few examples:

- Ride on an elevator to the highest floor of the building
- Go for a hike up a mountain or hillside
- Drive your car to a scenic overlook
- Sit in the upper deck of a stadium
- Climb a tree
- Go ziplining

# Worship

Carve out some time to listen to worship music, hum or sing along. Here are some great songs to get you started. These songs focus on the ascension and heaven. Look them up on YouTube if you don't have them in your music repertoire.

Pick your own songs and spend time worshipping and celebrating who God is to you and all the ways that he has blessed your life.

## Ascension Worship Songs:

- Crown Him with Many Crowns
- I Can Only Imagine
- Heaven's Song
- There Will Be a Day
- Revelation Song
- One Day (When We All Get to Heaven)
- Scars in Heaven
- Heaven Came Down
- Finally Home
- Peace in the Valley
- Soon and Very Soon

## Challenge:

### Helium Balloons

Go to the store and buy a helium balloon for each member of the family. Late in the evening, go outside or to the local park. Read the story of Jesus' departure from the disciples in Matthew 28:18-20. Talk about what it would have been like for the disciples to see Jesus ascend into the clouds. Consider writing a personal note to Jesus on each person's balloon. All together, release your balloons into the sky. As they "ascend" consider how Jesus reigns over the universe in heaven. Ask him to reign in your heart, too.

"At his Ascension our Lord entered Heaven, and He keeps the door open for humanity to enter."

—Oswald Chambers