

Learning Together Easter 7 Covid-19 – The Ascension

Have ready a sample Visioning Board – either a print out of the picture provided or make your own ahead of time.

We have heard the story of how Jesus was crucified and buried. We have heard the story of how when the disciples came to his tomb on Easter morning they found it empty! We have heard the story of how Jesus met once again with his disciples and how they had trouble at first believing that he was alive again. Today's story is called "the Ascension" and it tells of the last time the disciples saw Jesus in person. This story comes from the "Book of Acts" which is the part of the Bible that tells the story of what the disciples did as they started the first churches, so long ago.

It had been forty days since Jesus had first appeared to his disciples after the crucifixion but now it was time for him to leave them and go to heaven. This is a very mysterious story. Jesus promised the disciples that once he was gone, he would send the Holy Spirit to help guide them from the inside their hearts and minds. And then "when he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight." Very mysterious, indeed! And what do you suppose the disciples did? What would you do?

Well, the disciples stood there, staring up at the sky where he had gone! I think that is probably what I would have done, too. But here's another important part of the story – while they stood there staring, two men in white robes appeared and asked them "Why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go." And after that, the disciples stopped looking up at heaven, and started looking at what they could do in the world around them.

I think this is an important message for us now, in this time of staying at home. It is hard to know, that while we can start doing some things we used to again, it is going to take a long time before things are close to the way they were before, and some things may never be the same. We have a choice, we can keep looking back at the way things were and hope things get back to "normal" someday, or we can set our sights on where we are now and what we can do going forward.

I wonder what things you miss the most? I wonder what things you don't miss at all? I wonder what things you have really liked during this time of staying at home that didn't happen before, or didn't happen as often? Now is the time to start thinking about what a different future might look like, and how we might keep some of the changes we really like even as we regain some of the things we have missed. Our past lives may have been pretty good, but nothing is perfect. What have we learned about love and happiness during this time? What have we learned about healthy ways to show our anger and sadness?

My challenge to you is to make a “Visioning Board” about the future you want to make happen for yourself and your family. Get some kind of board to work with – it can be a bulletin board you already have, or a piece of poster board, or just some reused cardboard. Then start putting up words and pictures on it that show the way you would like your life to be. What are the things you miss that you will be glad to have back? What are the things you like now that you want to be sure you keep making time for? You can draw pictures and write words, or cut them out of magazines and put them on your board. You can even use stickers if you want! (*Hold up your sample, and maybe talk about a few things on it.**) Then keep the board somewhere where you can keep looking at it, to remind yourself of what is possible, and maybe to add to it as you go.

Join me in this echo prayer:

Loving God...we are always growing...and changing...in different ways....Help us to grow and change...in ways that are kind...and loving...and bring joy to your world... Amen.

**If you are using the sample Visioning Board, you might wish to know that the things I put on there that I like from this time are gardening and cooking with my family. The things I miss are hugs, playing music with friends, and the picture which says “my church friends” and “parades.” The picture is of me and my church friends marching together in a past Pride Parade. Note the variety of materials: magazine cut outs, printed things, hand written things, construction paper, and the word “hugs” is written in foam letter stickers. Encourage people to choose whatever combination of materials they like.*

My
Visioning
Board



My
Church
friends

HUGS



Parades