

Monday  
**Acts 1:1–14**

After his death and resurrection, Jesus visited with his disciples over a period of 40 days. During their time together, Jesus spoke often about the kingdom of God. The disciples listened carefully to everything Jesus commanded, and they were eager to know his plans. After witnessing his resurrection from the dead, the disciples knew that Jesus really was God's Son. They wondered if he might use his power to restore the kingdom of Israel and free the Jewish people from being ruled by the Romans. Jesus helped them understand that God had plans for a different kind of kingdom.

Jesus did give his disciples an exciting promise. He told them to wait in Jerusalem for a gift that his Father would send. They would receive the Holy Spirit. Jesus took his friends and helpers up to a hill outside Jerusalem. Jesus promised them, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

After Jesus had spoken these things, Jesus was lifted up, higher and higher, until he disappeared – and before they had a chance to feel too sad or discouraged about Jesus leaving them – two men dressed in white stood beside them. They were angels! The angels had a message for the disciples: "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will return in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." This was great news for Jesus' friends; Jesus would one day come back again!

The disciples did exactly what Jesus had commanded; they returned to Jerusalem to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised. While they waited, Jesus' followers devoted themselves to prayer. Together they worshipped Jesus. Jesus had finished his work on earth and had gone victoriously back to his home in heaven. The disciples had seen Jesus exercise authority over heaven and earth, and they knew he would keep his promise to hear their prayers and care for them, and that he would return one day, in power and great glory, to take them to be with him forever.

- **How did Jesus' friends know for sure that Jesus really was God's Son?**
- **What gift did Jesus promise that his followers would receive?**
- **How does knowing that Jesus is in heaven give you comfort in your life?**

Close with prayer

Tuesday  
**Acts 2:1–41**

When the annual harvest celebration day of Pentecost came, God-fearing Jews from all over the world were staying in Jerusalem to observe the festival. Jesus' disciples were meeting together when suddenly a sound like a mighty wind came from heaven. It filled the whole house. Those who were gathered saw what looked like tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each one of Jesus' followers. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak about what Jesus had done in languages other than their own.

The noise of the mighty wind and the bright tongues of fire drew the attention of others, and many people crowded around the disciples. They were amazed at what they saw and heard. Each person was hearing about Jesus in their own native language – languages Jesus' disciples had never learned to speak!

The people asked how it was that they could hear these people from Galilee declaring the wonders of God in their own native language. Some people made fun of the disciples, saying they must have been drinking too much wine. It was Peter who silenced the excited crowd. He stood up and spoke to them, explaining how the prophet Joel had said the Holy Spirit would be poured out in just this way. Then Peter preached a powerful sermon about who Jesus was and how he had come to pay for the sins of all who would trust in him. Three thousand people repented of their sins and put their faith in Jesus at the end of Peter's sermon.

Just as Jesus had promised, the Holy Spirit came to the disciples on Pentecost. God's Word promises the Holy Spirit to everyone who believes in Jesus as their Savior. So the brand-new believers who listened to Peter's sermon received the gift of the Holy Spirit. God gives the Holy Spirit to all of us who believe in Jesus today. The Holy Spirit lives in us and gives us power and wisdom to live for God and to tell about what Jesus has done.

- **Where did the people come from who heard Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost?**
- **Why was Peter able to preach such a powerful sermon?**
- **How does the Holy Spirit work in your own life?**

Close with prayer

Wednesday

## Genesis 2–3

God made the world and everything in it. He took only six days to do it! He made the earth, sky, and water. He made every plant and animal. He made the first people. God formed a man named Adam from the dust of the ground. Adam named all the animals. None of the animals were made like Adam. He was lonely, so God made a woman named Eve to live with Adam. They lived in a beautiful garden called Eden. Adam and Eve were happy in the garden. They took care of the plants and animals. Adam and Eve loved God. They loved each other.

God gave Adam and Eve one request as a way for them to show thanks and love to God. God said not to eat fruit from the tree in the center of the garden. God said, “Do not eat from it or you will die.” We call the things God wants us to do God's Law.

One day, the devil came to Eve in the shape of a snake. He told Eve not to believe God. He told her the fruit would make her be like God. Eve listened to the snake. She disobeyed God and sinned. She ate the fruit and gave some to Adam. He ate it and sinned too. This was the first sin. Adam and Eve suddenly became very aware that they had done wrong; they tried to hide from God. Forever after that first sin, when they and all people measured themselves against the expectations of God's Law, they would find themselves lacking and imperfect.

But God does not leave us in our sin. When we repent, he showers us with the forgiveness and salvation Jesus earned for us by keeping God's Law perfectly in our place and by taking upon himself the punishment we deserved.

Now, as his forgiven people, we look upon God's Law in another way. We desire to do what God wants and ask God to guide us through the new life God has given us – a life lived in love and thanks for him.

- **Why do all people need Jesus?**
- **How did Jesus save us?**
- **Even though we are forgiven for every time that we break God's Law, why is it still important to learn about God's Law?**

Dear Father, when Satan tries to trip us with temptations, help us follow the path lit for us by your Word.  
Amen.

Thursday  
**Mark 15:6–39**

Jesus had to die. People who hated Jesus said so. But God said so too. God loved his Son, Jesus. But he also loved us. Jesus died to take away our sins. Here is how it happened: Jesus had done nothing wrong. Still, his enemies put him on trial. Some people shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" They wanted soldiers to put Jesus on a cross. They wanted Jesus to hang from the cross until he died. Pilate, the Roman governor, said, "Take Jesus away and crucify him."

They brought Jesus to a hill called Calvary (or Golgotha). They nailed Jesus' hands and feet to the cross. They lifted the cross and placed it into a hole in the ground. People passed by the cross. Many of them made fun of Jesus. They didn't believe he was the Savior.

It was early afternoon, but the sky grew dark! Jesus hurt all over. He spoke from the cross. Then he died. There was a terrible earthquake. Big rocks split. The thick curtain in the temple tore from top to bottom. One of the Roman soldiers guarding the cross said, "Jesus really was the Son of God!"

We remember the day when Jesus died. We call it "Good Friday." We call it a "good" day even though it was so very sad because on Good Friday Jesus died for the sins of the world. He paid for our sins. Now we can be forgiven and live someday forever with God in heaven!

Dear Jesus, your great love is more than I can comprehend. Thank you for volunteering to take my sins and die for them in my place. Amen.

Friday

## Matthew 28:1–15

The friends of Jesus were sad. They were afraid too. Jesus was dead. They thought Jesus' enemies might kill them too. Jesus was buried in a place called a tomb. It was like a cave. The door to the cave was covered with a big rock. Soldiers guarded the tomb. They didn't want anyone to take Jesus' body.

It was Sunday morning. There was an earthquake again. An angel came down from heaven and rolled away the big rock. The soldiers were so afraid that they fell over. Two of Jesus' friends were among some of the people who came to his tomb. Both of them were named Mary. The two Marys could see inside the tomb. They were afraid. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus. He is not in the tomb anymore. He came back to life, just as he said he would. You will see him soon."

The two Marys were happy. They ran from the tomb. Suddenly, they stopped. They saw Jesus. He was alive! They ran to him. Jesus said, "Go and tell my disciples that you saw me. Tell them I am alive. I will meet them later."

We call this happy day "Easter." Easter is a day of celebration. On this day, we remember that Jesus once was dead but is alive again. Christians down through the years have greeted one another in a special way on Easter. When people say, "He is risen!" others say back, "He is risen indeed!" Easter is happy because after we die, Jesus will bring us back from the dead, just as he brought himself back from death to life.

- **How can we be sure that when we die we will wake up in heaven?**

Dear Jesus, thank you for saving me though your death and resurrection so that I will go to heaven when I die. Give me guidance and power to live, knowing that I am always in your loving arms. Amen.