

Revelation 21:1-4 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

2 Corinthians 5:1-10 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

A "new" heaven and earth:

Last week, from reading the story of Lazarus, we learned these things:
Both the rich man and Lazarus remembered their lives, their relatives.
They maintained their identities and were recognizable as themselves.

From the passage in Revelation 21:1-4 we discovered that there will be a new heaven and a new earth. These will be sinless versions of the current heaven and earth. Like now but great! No sadness, pain, or death. No selfishness.

Now read 2 Corinthians 5:1-10. Do you ever "groan" or feel burdened (unhappy) that you can't go to heaven right away?

For those who are sick, suffering, and very poor, wanting to go to heaven is easy. For those who have a nice life (like most of us) we don't really want to go to heaven. We're good with this life. **Good has become the enemy of the best.**

Perhaps it is more important to consider *who* we'll be with. We know we will be with all our Christian friends and relatives. Who would you like to hang with?

What is the feeling we have towards these people? _____

The passage in Revelation says we will be with _____ Himself. Does that make you as excited as the Bible guys? Why, or why not?

Here is a poem from one of you:

There now steady love
So few come and don't go.
Will you be the one
I'll always know?

When I lose control
the city spins around.
You're the only one
who can slow it down.

If ever there was a doubt,
my love leans into me,
it most assuredly counts,
she says most assuredly.

Reflecting the deep desire of the human heart to be loved truly, people seek this love from each other. However, the true source of love is found in the one *true* God. He says:

Deuteronomy 31:8 **The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."**

It is interesting to note that the word "deposit" in 2 Corinthians literally means "engagement ring".

We must live life with this hope, looking toward heaven.

Lesson Plan: A New Heaven and Earth

The Goal: This lesson is a follow-up to the lesson entitled, “What Happens When You Die?”

The goal of this lesson is to help kids develop an understanding of the goal of our faith. A lot of “Christian” teaching these days is primarily focused on making our lives better now. Healing services and the “prosperity gospel” crowd out proper teaching. Kids in the US have it pretty good. They don’t really want to go to heaven and can’t imagine that it can be better than earth. At their age, the world and its possibilities are just opening up to them. In Biblical speak, Satan has just begun to parade his exciting wares before their eyes. Fancy cars, great vacations, sex & relationships, making money, parties! Who wants to think about heaven?

Leading the lesson:

Spend some time in prayer the day before, going over the verses and questions in your mind.

Have a kid read the first set of verses and then go through the questions for those verses. Give them time to answer. Listen to what they say and lead the discussion with additional questions of your own to lead them to the correct answers.

Note: When reading, kids will frequently stumble on words they do not know. Explain the meaning of the words so they can fully grasp the concept of the Bible verse. Sometimes you must restate the passage in your own words for them to get it.

Open the discussion by asking, “Who wants to go to heaven?” or, “What do you want to do before you go to heaven?”

The concept that **Good has become the enemy of the best** will be shocking but interesting. Discuss this statement at length. In their hearts teens are becoming aware of their need to be loved. Relationships with the opposite gender seem to offer the greatest opportunity to fill this need. The poem, written by one of the kids in class reflects this desire.

Summary:

The driving motivation behind relationships is voiced in 1 Corinthians 12:12: “*Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*” Discuss what it would be like to be in a pure relationship of this kind, a relation that only God can offer.

Take Prayer Requests

Always ask the kids for prayer requests for the next week. Check how things have turned out from the previous weeks concerns.