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Welcome Back, Jesus!

Key References: Isaiah 25:9; Matthew 24; 25:31; 26:64; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; Revelation 1:7; *The Great Controversy*, chap. 40, pp. 635-652; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 10, pp. 145-148; Our Beliefs nos. 25, 26, 28.















powertext

"'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven'" (Acts 1:11).

Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 102.

powerpoint

God's Spirit empowers us to tell others about the blessed hope of Jesus' soon return.

Have you ever had a family member die? How did it make you feel? Wesley experiences a family death for the first time. Although sad, it turns out to be a good opportunity to share the hope that Jesus brings.

Wesley's eyes were big, and he looked a little frightened when Mom returned home. "What happened, Mom? How did Grandpa die? What did he look like? What's going to happen now?" Mom smiled at all the questions her anxious 10-year-old son spewed out. She bent down and gave Wesley a big hug. Her eyes were red and puffy from crying.

"Well, Grandpa's heart just stopped beating. He had another heart attack, but this time it was a big one. He died very quickly. When I saw him, he just looked as if he were sleeping—actually, very peaceful."

"What will Grandma do now?" Wesley asked.

"She will live by herself now. She's very sad, and I know she will miss him a lot. They'd been married more than 50 years," Mom replied.

"That's a long time!" said Wesley in amazement.

"I'm so glad Jesus will come back soon and make Grandpa young and healthy again. He had so many health problems these past few years, and he had a lot of pain. I can't wait for Jesus to come," said Mom.

"Me too!" said Wesley. "When we meet in heaven, I want Grandpa to give me a piggyback ride the way he used to!"

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Sunday

READ Read Matthew 24:36-44 and this week's story, "Welcome Back, Jesus!"

REVIEW Review the power text.

THINK Why are you looking forward to the resurrection at Jesus' second coming?

PRAY Ask God to help you prepare for Jesus' coming.

Monday

READ Read Matthew 24:45-51.

NOTICE Notice clouds this week, and think about Jesus coming in them with His angels.

PLAN Plan a "Welcome Back, Jesus" party for your Friday night supper.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray for someone who doesn't know Jesus.

Tuesday

READ Look up Luke 21:25-31 and 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

THINK What signs do you recognize that predict Jesus' soon return as you hear world news this week?

ASK Ask people what they believe about Jesus' coming.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask for wisdom to tell others about Jesus' return.

"I'm sure he'll want to give you a piggyback ride too!" Mom said with a smile. Wesley giggled at the thought of that. "It's just such a shock to think that he's gone," Mom said with a sigh.

The next week brought many family members into town for Grandpa's memorial service at Wesley's church. Some stayed at Wesley's house, including his aunt Jane and his uncle Steve, who was not a Christian. The memorial service was attended by many church members, family, and friends. Beautiful flowers decorated the front of the church. Peaceful music played while people filed into the church. Uncle John spoke about Grandpa's life—where he was born and lived, how he had been a math teacher, about his love of horses and apple pies, about meeting his future wife in college, and about his many children and grandchildren. Pastor Williams talked about "the blessed hope" of Jesus' promise of returning to earth, and about seeing Grandpa again when Jesus raises him from the grave. The congregation sang "We Have This Hope," which Wesley thought was beautiful in its words and



music. *There was a lot of talk about hope,* he thought afterward. Wesley wondered what Uncle Steve thought of Grandpa's death. He wondered if Uncle Steve believed in any of what Pastor Williams said at the memorial service. He wondered if his uncle had any hope in his heart.

Later that afternoon Wesley and his family all had a meal together that had been prepared by families from the church. Everyone enjoyed the delicious variety of food and the fact that they didn't have to cook, but could just spend time together reminiscing about Grandpa and family events. Some laughed as they remembered a family camping trip when their tent had collapsed in the middle of the night. Others talked about how they should now help Grandma with things that Grandpa used to take care of around the house. Uncle Steve asked if anyone had heard on the news about the big earthquake that day that had killed thousands of people. Grandma shook her head and said, "No, but it's just another sign that Jesus is coming soon, and praise the Lord, He is! I'll be able to see Grandpa again." All nodded their heads in agreement. Someone hugged Grandma as her eyes teared up.

Wesley looked at Uncle Steve to see his reaction. He was surprised to see him nodding his head also. Wesley nudged his mom. "I thought Uncle Steve didn't believe in Jesus," he whispered to her. She winked back at him and smiled.

The next day after everyone had gone back home, Wesley asked if they could plan a "Welcome Back, Jesus" party for Friday evening supper. Mom looked surprised and asked, "What's that?" Wesley explained that several months ago he remembered his Sabbath School teacher talking about Jesus' second coming and how we'll celebrate and welcome Him back to earth when He comes. "Sure, we can do that," Mom said.



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Wednesday

READ Look up Acts 1:8.

THINK Where is God sending you to witness for Him?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask for the Holy Spirit's power in your life.

Thursday

READ Read John 5:28, 29.

IMAGINE Imagine people coming back to life again. Whom do you most want to see alive again?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank Jesus for the blessed hope of His return.

Friday

READ Read Isaiah 25:9.

ACT Act out the coming of Jesus with your family.

THINK Ask each family member to tell the reason they look forward to seeing Jesus. What will each of them ask Him or tell Him?

SING Sing "Lift Up the Trumpet" or another song about Jesus' coming.

REPEAT Repeat the power text aloud by memory.

PRAY Stand in a circle holding hands and pray sentence prayers. Tell Jesus how much you wait for His return. Ask Him to enable you to be one of His faithful messengers until He comes. Ask that through you others might hear about Him and accept Him as their personal Savior and Friend.

Friday evening Mom spread a colorful tablecloth over the kitchen table, lit a few candles, and placed some festive napkins beside their dinner plates. Wesley blew up a few balloons and taped them to the walls with some streamers. He made a sign that said, "Welcome Back, Jesus!" and he placed it in the center of the table propped up against the salad bowl. "Yea, pizza!" Wesley exclaimed as Mom carried the food to the table from the oven.

"I thought you'd like that for our party!" she said.

"Before we eat I thought we'd read something from the Bible." She opened her Bible to 1 Thessalonians 4 and asked Wesley to read verses 13-18. He read:

" 'Brothers and sisters, we do not want you



to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.'"

Wesley closed the Bible and smiled. "I love hearing about Jesus' coming. I can't wait. It gives me hope." Mom smiled, and nodded in agreement. "Oh, I almost forgot. What did you think about Uncle Steve when Grandma brought up Jesus' coming?" Wesley asked.

Mom replied, "I think seeds of hope were planted in his heart. I talked to Aunt Jane later about that. You know she's been praying for him for years. We all have. She said he has been asking questions lately, and he is beginning to be interested in Jesus. We'll just keep praying for him," she said.

Wesley smiled. "I will keep praying for him because I want him to be happy to see Jesus come. I want him to be a part of our whole family in heaven."



PUZZLE
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SIGNS OF JESUS' RETURN

1. **N** →→→ = ___
2. **B** ←←↑ = ___
3. **E** ↓←←↑ = ___
4. **S** ←←← = ___
5. **X** ←↑↑ = ___
6. **Q** ←←↓ = ___
7. **E** ↓←↑ = ___
8. **G** ↓↓→ = ___
9. **H** →→↑↑ = ___
10. **C** ↓→→↑ = ___
11. **L** →→↓↓ = ___
12. **W** →→↓ = ___
13. **D** ↓→→ = ___
14. **I** ↓↓→→ = ___
15. **K** ↓←↓ = ___
16. **C** ↓↓→→ = ___
17. **Q** →↓→ = ___
18. **X** ↓↓←← = ___
19. **D** ↓↓← = ___
20. **B** ↑↑←↓ = ___
21. **G** ↓←↑ = ___
22. **N** ↑↑→ = ___

Instructions:
For this puzzle, follow the arrows to get the correct letter to complete the sentences. For example to help you get started

1. **N** →→→ = **S**

I	**G**	**E**	**C**	**X**	**D**
K	**H**	**P**	**W**	**V**	**Y**
H	**X**	**R**	**Y**	**M**	**T**
F	**L**	**Z**	**E**	**K**	**C**
D	**T**	**Q**	**H**	**O**	**E**
N	**J**	**A**	**S**	**U**	**B**

The sun will stop ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ .
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The moon will become ___ ___ ___ .
8 9 10

There will be falling ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ .
11 12 13 14 15

Nations will be in ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ .
16 17 18 19 20 21 22