

6

The Gift of Heaven

Grace
We are heirs of God's kingdom by grace.

POWER TEXT

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:1, 2).

KEY REFERENCES

- Revelation 21; 22
- *The Great Controversy*, chap. 42, pp. 662-678
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 10, pp. 167-175
- Student lesson on page 72 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 28, The New Earth
- No. 25, The Second Coming of Christ
- No. 18, The Gift of Prophecy

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that because of God's gift of grace, we can live with Him forever.
- **Feel** excited at the prospect of living with God in heaven.
- **Respond** by accepting God's gift of eternal life by grace.



Eternal life is ours when we accept God's gift of grace.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

John is given a vision of a majestic heaven and a glorious new earth. He sees the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven. The jewels and beauty of it are beyond our imagination. Best of all, we are to live with God Himself.

This is a lesson about grace.

Because of Jesus' death and His grace to us, we are citizens of the heavenly kingdom (Philippians 3:20). Heaven is a real place, and we will live with God forever because of what Jesus has done for us. God's gift of heaven will be more wonderful than we can ever know here on earth, but it is good to try to imagine what a creative, caring God has in store for His people. Praise God for making this all a reality. This gives us hope and encouragement.

Teacher Enrichment

Revelation 21 and 22 portrays a new heaven and a new earth. In his vivid description of heaven John shows streets paved with gold, gates made of single pearls, etc. It is just John's way of bringing out the important point that the ultimate state of affairs will be very precious. He had to use earthly comparisons to help us understand the splendor of heaven.

"Those who are victorious" (Revelation 21:7, NIV): The victors are now assured that in the final triumph they will inherit all things. They will have no lack. Moreover God will be their God, and they will be God's children. They will have a special relationship to the supreme Ruler of all (adapted from Leon Morris, *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, The Revelation of St. John [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1981], pp. 242-254).

How does the prospect of eternal life in heaven help me live my life until Jesus comes? Whom could I tell the great news about heaven today?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at the door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. If You Want It . . .*	small gift-wrapped box for each student with card inside
		B. Who Am I?	Bibles, paper name signs, tape
		C. Glimpses of Heaven	Bibles, old magazines (or precut pictures), scissors, glue, paper
		D. Heaven To-Do List	Bibles, paper, pencils
* Prayer & Praise	15-20	See page 67. Prayer & Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, gift-wrapped box for offering
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story	Bibles, *Early Writings* passages (p. 146)
		Experiencing the Story	adult, Bible costume
		Exploring the Bible	Bibles, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Scenario*	
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Accept the Gift*	gift boxes, paper, art supplies
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments	
		B. Reminder to Parents	
		C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ small gift-wrapped box for each student with card inside

If You Want It . . .

Prepare a box with gift wrap and name tag for each of your students. In each box, place an attractively written card that says "ETERNAL LIFE IN HEAVEN WITH GOD" and then the power point:

Eternal life is ours when we accept the gift from God.

As soon as the first students arrive, let them know that you have a special wrapped box for everyone and you will give it to them if they remember to ask you for it at the end of Sabbath School today. Do not make any other reference to it until the appropriate time. Do not feed their curiosity or answer any questions about it. (See Sharing the Lesson for the conclusion to this exercise.) Say: **Let's say together the power text, Revelation 21:1, 2:**

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:1, 2).

Let's remember the message stated in our power point:

Eternal life is ours when we accept God's gift of grace.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ paper name signs
- ☐ tape

Who Am I?

Beforehand, write the name of a Bible character (who probably will be in heaven) on a piece of paper to make a sign for each student. When the students arrive, without their seeing the name, tape it on their back. Say: **Each of you is a Bible character who will probably be in heaven, but you don't know who you are. Ask the other students yes/no questions to discover your identity.**

Debriefing

Ask: **What Bible character would you like to meet in heaven? What would you ask that person? How excited are you about heaven?** Say: **Let's say together the power text, Revelation 21:1, 2:**

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:1, 2).

Let's remember the hopeful message stated in our power point:

Eternal life is ours when we accept God's gift of grace.

C

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ old magazines (OR precut pictures)
- ☐ scissors
- ☐ glue
- ☐ paper

Glimpses of Heaven

Ask students to create "glimpses of heaven" pictures with the materials.

Debriefing

Say: **Let's imagine heaven as we say the power text:**

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:1, 2).

Let's say together our power point:

Eternal life is ours when we accept God's gift of grace.

D

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils

Heaven To-Do List

Ask: **If this was your first day in heaven, what would you want to do first? Make a "to-do" list of what you would want to do and whom you would want to see, in order of importance to you.**

Debriefing

Ask: **Who would like to share what they wrote? What kinds of feelings did you have as you wrote your list?**

Say: **Let's imagine heaven as we say the power text:**

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:1, 2).

Now let's repeat together our power point:

Eternal life is ours when we accept God's gift of grace.

Prayer & Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Soon and Very Soon" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 121)
"The Lord Is Building Jerusalem" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 117)
"We Shall Behold Him" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 122)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use Adventist *Mission* magazine for youth and adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. Using a world map, have the students identify and mark with pushpins the location where the mission story is taking place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ gift-wrapped box

Ask: **What is the real reason for giving?** Use a gift-wrapped box to collect the offering.

Prayer

In prayer, give class members opportunity to express their thanks to God for their blessings. Ask each member to offer thanks for a specific answer to prayer or blessing that they have received sometime during the past year. Close with a prayer for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

2

BIBLE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- □ Bibles
- □ copies of p. 146

Introducing the Bible Story

Beforehand, make copies of page 146.

Ask students to form groups of three or four. Have them take turns to read aloud selections from Ellen White's account of her first vision, taken from pages 13-20 of *Early Writings*, in which she describes heaven. As they read about the things that she saw in her vision, ask students to find reference to them in Revelation 21 and 22.

Then ask students to think about and create a list of the best things that they could associate with being with Jesus.

Debriefing

Ask: **What things usually come to mind when you think of heaven? From what you know about God, how do you feel about spending eternity with Him? Why would some people not be happy in heaven? How is it comforting to know that God wants every one of us to be in His heavenly kingdom with Him? What five questions would you most like to ask God about heaven?**

Say: **Today we are going to discuss what we already know from the Bible and other inspired writings about heaven.**

Let's remember the hopeful message found in our power point:

Eternal life is ours when we accept God's gift of grace.

YOU NEED:
- □ adult
- □ Bible costume

Experiencing the Story

Ahead of time, ask an adult male in your church to dress as John and to present Revelation 21 and 22 as a dramatic monologue. He can read from a modern translation or, preferably, paraphrase it himself. If he is comfortable doing so, let him answer questions from the students.

Debriefing

Say: **Let's repeat the power text, Revelation 21:1, 2:**

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:1, 2).

What do we have to do to make this our own? Remember our power point:

Eternal life is ours when we accept God's gift of grace.

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

Exploring the Bible

Give your students the references listed below, and in small groups or together, have them find descriptions of what we already know about eternity. As they discover the descriptions, write them where all can see.

Say: **"The Bible devotes much less space to describing eternity than it does to convincing people that eternal life is available as a free gift from God. Most of the brief descriptions of eternity would be more accurately called hints, since they use terms and ideas from present experience to describe what we cannot fully grasp until we are there ourselves. These references hint at aspects of what our future will be like if we have accepted Christ's gift of eternal life"** (*Life Application Bible*, Notes and Bible Helps [Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1991], p. 2333). Use the following texts to find the "hints."

1. John 14:2, 3 (a place prepared for us)
2. John 20:19, 26 (unlimited by physical properties [1 Corinthians 15:35-49])
3. 1 John 3:2 (We will be like Jesus.)
4. 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 (We will have new bodies.)
5. 1 Corinthians 2:9 (Our experience will be wonderful.)
6. Revelation 21:1 (a new environment)
7. Revelation 21:3 (a new experience of God's presence [1 Corinthians 13:12])
8. Revelation 21:4 (New emotions; there will be no more death.)

Debriefing

Ask: **How do you feel about what authors in the Bible say about eternity? What do you wish to experience in heaven?** Say: **Let's repeat once again the power text:**

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:1, 2).

Let's remember the message in our power point:

Eternal life is ours when we accept God's gift of grace.

Scenario

Read the following scenario to your students:

Tabitha desperately wants to go to heaven. She has tried her best to do all the things she thinks are right. She goes to church, helps with a homeless project, and is obedient to her parents. She feels that Jesus wants her to go to heaven, but she is worried that she's not doing enough to get there.

Debriefing

Ask: **What can you say to Tabitha? How can you convince her that it is a gift? What does she need to do? How can you share with her a message of hope?** Say: **Let's remember the promise stated in our power point:**

Eternal life is ours when we accept God's gift of grace.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ gift boxes
- ☐ paper
- ☐ art supplies

Accept the Gift

Invite students to tell the class their experiences from last week if they had the opportunity to share with a friend reasons they look forward to heaven. Ask: **Whom did you encourage to accept Jesus' gift of grace that offers access to God's kingdom in heaven? Were you able to encourage someone to allow Jesus to be Lord of his/her life and to accept God's gift of eternal life?**

If you did Readiness A, telling the students that you had a special, wrapped box for them, say: **Now is the time you have been waiting for.** Pause and see if anyone remembers that they were to receive a gift box. Use this as a "teachable moment." If students remember and are still anxious about what is in their box, let them open them and point out that God wants us to be just as eager to accept the gift of eternal life. If they hardly remember that you had something for them, discuss how God feels to have prepared such a special gift for everyone and not to have many people accept the gift. Help the students decide on a friend or family member with whom they can share the gift box they just received.

If you did not do Readiness A, help the students create a gift box for a specific friend or family member with the message inside. They may also want to include a list of the texts that describe how eternal life will be. Say: **Let's repeat once again our power point:**

Eternal life is ours when we accept God's gift of grace.

Closing

Prayer and Closing Comments:

Say: **Dear God, thank You so much for the gift of eternal life with You in heaven. We can't imagine the wonderful things You have in store for us. We want to accept Your gift of grace. Amen.**

Reminder to Parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming Up Next Week:

Say: **Jesus is preparing us a home in His kingdom. We will live with Him forever.**

Notes

Student lesson

The Gift of Heaven

"Oh, another dreary day. Nothing exciting is going to happen." When was the last time you felt like that? John the disciple probably did on the island of Patmos. But something exciting did happen one day—he saw a vision of heaven and the new earth! Imagine it.

It was the Sabbath day. John sat quietly, all alone on the rocky island of Patmos, where, as punishment for preaching the gospel and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, he had been sent far away from everyone and everything. John was lonely. But he wasn't discouraged, for now he had all the time in the world to pray and worship God.

As John looked out over the rocky shore, suddenly a loud voice like a trumpet called out to him. "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea" (Revelation 1:11).

John was startled. He turned quickly to see the source of the voice, and he saw seven golden lampstands. But what really caught his attention was the Person who was walking among the lampstands. It was a Man wearing a long white robe with a golden sash around His chest. He shone with a dazzling brightness, and His voice was like a thundering waterfall. *This must be Jesus*, John thought in awe.

Then Jesus, putting His hand on John's shoulder, spoke to him. "Do not be afraid," Jesus said. "I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore" (see verses 17, 18).

Jesus told John many things about God's people and the Christian church down through the ages. As though he were watching pictures on a giant screen, John watched in amazement as Jesus showed him the exciting events that would one day become reality.

Some of the things John saw were difficult for him to understand, but there was one scene that John had no problem understanding. It was a glorious vision of the new heaven and the new earth—the awesome place that God has prepared for His children. "I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband" (Revelation 21:2, NIV).

As he admired this gorgeous city, glistening like crystal, John heard a voice saying that God would now live with His people. He would wipe away their tears. There wouldn't be any more sadness or pain or death. He would make everything new.

John watched in amazement as this gorgeous city came down and rested right in the spot where Jerusalem had been before God cleansed the earth and made it new. The sight was so breathtaking that John could hardly find the right words. It was more beautiful than anything he had ever seen. John described it something like this: "The golden city forms a perfect square, with three gates made of pearl on each side. Around the city is a wall made of beautiful, bright, glimmering stones. The streets are made of solid gold that is so pure, it has the appearance of transparent glass.

"The presence of God and Jesus makes the city so bright that there is no need for the sun or even the moon. And in this city the doors never have to be locked, because there is no night there nor anyone who steals. Only those whose names are written in the Book of Life can live in this city.

"The river of life with its crystal clear water flows from the throne of God across the city. And in the middle of the city, on both sides of the river, is the tree of life, bearing 12 kinds of fruit every year." Can you imagine that? A different fruit for every month of the year!

But the best news that John heard that day is that Jesus is coming soon. "Look, I am coming soon!" Jesus said. "Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll" (see Revelation 21:10-22:7).

When Jesus comes, He wants to take you and me to heaven to live with Him forever. Are you planning to accept the gift of eternal life?

KEY REFERENCES

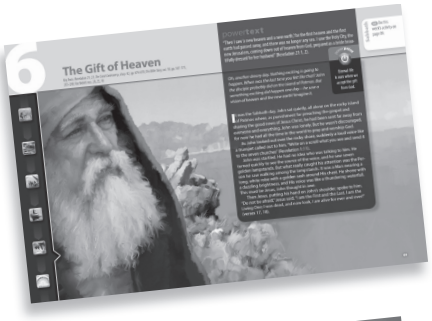
- Revelation 21; 22
- *The Great Controversy*, chap. 42, pp. 662-678
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 10, pp. 167-175
- Our Beliefs, nos. 28, 25, 18

POWER TEXT

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:1, 2).

POWER POINT

Eternal life is ours when we accept God's gift of grace.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 47.

Sunday

READ Read Revelation 21:3–8 and this week's story, "The Gift of Heaven."

LEARN Begin to learn the power text.

CREATE Draw, paint, or write a description of the most beautiful bride and groom on their wedding day.

PRAY Ask God to help you wholeheartedly accept His gift of eternal life.

Monday

READ Read Revelation 21:9–14.

PHONE Call a friend and have a conversation about the things you look forward to enjoying in heaven.

SELECT Select a few hymns from *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* that describe a beautiful picture of heaven. Read the words carefully to yourself, sing or play the hymns, or listen to them on recordings.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray for wisdom and creativity to share Jesus.

Tuesday

READ Read Revelation 21:15–27.

THINK How do you feel knowing that God is preparing a place for you in the Holy City?

DO Find a way to encourage someone to accept Jesus as personal Savior and the gift of eternal life He offers.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to use you to encourage others to accept His gift of eternal life.

Wednesday

READ Read Revelation 21:19, 20.

FIND Find out what is the color of each of the precious stones mentioned in today's Bible reading.

DRAW Draw a picture of the 12 precious stones that will form the foundations of the city and color them the correct color.

REVIEW Review the power text, Revelation 21:1, 2.

PRAY Thank God for how beautiful heaven will be.

Thursday

READ Read Revelation 22.

THINK Are you ready for Jesus' second coming and for eternal life in His kingdom? What does it mean to you that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End (Revelation 22:13)?

CREATE Illustrate a scene of heaven from Revelation 21 and 22 through a drawing, painting, collage, or sculpture.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for the biblical description of the wonderful things we will experience in heaven. Ask God to prepare you for eternal life in His kingdom.

Friday

READ Read Revelation 22:20, 21.

DISCUSS At family worship, talk about your first experiences in heaven.

WALK Take a walk and notice the nature around you.

NAME Name 10 things from nature that you will enjoy experiencing in heaven.

REPEAT Say the power text from memory.

PRAY Thank God for the beautiful earth He made, and for the even better new earth He is preparing for you.