

8

Citizens of the Love Kingdom

Grace

We are heirs of God's kingdom by grace.

POWER TEXT

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33).

KEY REFERENCES

- Exodus 20:1-17
- Matthew 22:34-40
- John 14:15
- *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chap. 27, pp. 303-314
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 2, pp. 153-158; vol. 10, pp. 161-164, 128-131
- Student lesson on page 92 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 19, The Law of God
- No. 14, Unity in the Body of Christ
- No. 11, Growing in Christ

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that God's commandments describe what life is like in His kingdom of love.
- **Feel** willing to have the Holy Spirit prepare them to be citizens of this kingdom.
- **Respond** by committing to open their lives completely to God's transforming grace.

POWERPOINT

God is writing His law of love on our hearts to prepare us for citizenship in heaven.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Ever since humanity sinned and came under the control of Satan, God has worked to redeem them and to restore them back into His image, fit to be citizens of heaven once again. The citizens of the kingdom of heaven live by a law. God gave the law in 10 parts to Moses and a new nation of former slaves when He spoke to them from Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:1-17). Jesus spoke that law in two parts to the people among whom He lived when some religious leaders questioned Him about the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:34-40). As we love, study, and try to serve God, these commandments, laws, or truth about God and His kingdom are being written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We are being changed into citizens of heaven right now.

This is a lesson about grace.

God, through His grace, His truth, and the work of His Holy Spirit, transforms us into citizens of heaven.

Teacher Enrichment

"We embrace the truth of God with our different faculties, and as we come under the influence of that truth, it will accomplish the work for us which is necessary to give us a moral fitness for the kingdom of glory and for the society of the heavenly angels. We are now in God's workshop. Many of us are rough stones from the quarry. But as we lay hold upon the truth of God, its influence affects us. It elevates us and removes from us every imperfection and sin, of what ever nature. Thus we are prepared to see the King in His beauty and finally to unite with the pure and heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory. It is here that this work is to be accomplished for us, here that our bodies and spirits are to be fitted for immortality" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 355).

How is my life changing as a result of God's grace? How will I lay hold of God's truth 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. Packing for the Trip*	Bibles, paper, pencils
		B. World Tour	Bibles, paper, pencils, ink stamps and pads OR hole punch, country signs, tape
		C. Career Choices	Bibles, paper, colored markers
* Prayer & Praise	15-20	See page 87. Prayer & Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, offering plate/basket
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story	Bibles
		Experiencing the Story	Bibles, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk
		Exploring the Bible	Bibles, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Scenarios*	
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Passport for Heaven*	paper, pencils, genuine passport (optional)
* 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:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils

Packing for the Trip

Say: **Think of any place in the world you would like to visit. Write a packing list of things you will need.**

Debriefing

Ask: **Where do you want to go? What kinds of things will you need to take with you? Have you ever thought about the trip you will be making to heaven and what kinds of things you will need to take with you? Will you need to take any material things?** (no) **What about your character—who you really are inside? You will be taking that. Can you sense God preparing you now for your trip? Are you being prepared right now for the trip? How is obedience to God's law an important step in our preparation for His kingdom? We know that we are not saved because we keep the Ten Commandments. We are saved by grace, by faith in Jesus' sacrifice. So why is keeping God's law important? What do we show by obeying God's law?** (That we love Him.)

Say: **Let's find and read Matthew 22:37, 38. These verses are Jesus' summary of what a citizen of heaven will be like. Now let's say together our power text, Jeremiah 31:33:**

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33).

Let's repeat our power point:

God is writing His law of love on our hearts to prepare us for citizenship in heaven.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils
- ☐ ink stamps and pads OR hole punch
- ☐ country signs
- ☐ tape

World Tour

Beforehand, make a "passport" for each student by simply drawing eight squares on each sheet of paper. Assign an adult to each of eight different areas in the room where they will have either an ink stamp and pad or hole punch. Each area should represent a different country. Make a sign for each area with the country's name on it. When students arrive, give each a "passport" and tell them they need to visit each "country." They will tell the adult helper the name of a city in that country. Then one square will be stamped or punched.

Debriefing

Ask: **How many got all eight squares stamped or punched? Have you ever visited a foreign country? Have you ever wished you lived in another country? Which one? How would life be different there than it is here? When you move to a foreign country, you need to abide by the laws of that country. Why is it important to obey the laws of the country in which you live?** (Your safety and well-being depends on abiding by the rules and laws of that country. Usually laws are made to reinforce order and safeguard the rights and freedoms of the citizens.) **Did you know that while we are living on earth we are preparing to live in heaven? Why is obedience to God's law an important step in our preparation for citizenship in His kingdom?** (God's law is in place to ensure our spiritual, emotional, social, and physical well-being.) **What do we show by obeying God's law?** (That we love Him.) Say: **Let's find and read Matthew 22:37, 38. Now let's say together our power text, Jeremiah 31:33:**

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33).

Let's say our power point:

God is writing His law of love on our hearts to prepare us for citizenship in heaven.

C

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ paper
- ☐ colored markers

Career Choices

Ask the students to draw a picture of the career they would like to follow. Ask students to share their pictures and what they hope to be someday.

Debriefing

Ask: **What kind of training or education will you need for your career? How many years will it take to prepare to do that job? What are some guidelines you have to follow as you prepare for a career? Did you know that while we are on earth we are preparing to live in heaven someday? What are some of the guidelines we need to follow in preparation for heaven?** (God's law outlines how we need to live as we prepare for heaven.)

Say: **Let's find and read Matthew 22:37, 38. Now let's say together our power text, Jeremiah 31:33:**

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33).

Let's repeat our power point:

God is writing His law of love on our hearts to prepare us for citizenship in heaven.

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

"One Thing Have I Desired" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 104)
"I Want to Be Ready" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 151)
"Into My Heart" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 152)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Say: **Although we often suffer the consequences of our willful disobedience of God's law, God delights in forgiving our sins and turning things around. It is a joy to share this good news with others.** 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 mark with pushpins the location of the mission story.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ offering plate/basket

Explain that the offerings we give go to build up the kingdom of God on this earth, together with all who sincerely choose to be citizens of that kingdom.

Prayer

Say: **We need to pray for people in the world who have no knowledge of God's grace.** Ask students to pray for the leadership in their countries, and also for strength and courage to be good citizens while here on earth. Meanwhile, encourage them to begin praying for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, to prepare them for citizenship in heaven. 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

Introducing the Bible Story

Ask: **How many of you are citizens of this country in which we live? Were you born here, or did your family become citizens after you came here?** Tell a little about what it takes to become a citizen of your country. Ask: **Who can become a citizen here? How does a citizen have to act toward their country?** (Obey the laws, be loyal, treat fellow citizens respectfully, etc.) **How does this compare with being a citizen of heaven? How will citizens of heaven act?**

Say: **Let's try to repeat our power text together, Jeremiah 31:33:**

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33).

Our power point reminds us that

God is writing His law of love on our hearts to prepare us for citizenship in heaven.

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

Experiencing the Story

Ask students to find Exodus 20:1-17 in the Bible. Ask volunteers to read out loud to you each commandment of the Ten Commandments while you write its abbreviated form (see page 91) where all can see. Then have a "sword drill," using the passages from the New Testament and have the students find the matching Commandment from Exodus (see page 91). Write the corresponding commandment from Exodus next to the abbreviated form from the New Testament (see page 91 for format). Discuss how Jesus' words explain and expand the concepts in Exodus.

Ask: **Do Jesus' explanations of the principles of God's kingdom seem easier or more difficult to keep than the 10 in Exodus? How are these guidelines about loving God and loving our neighbors? How do they help prepare us for citizenship in God's kingdom of love? How will a person who doesn't want to let God write His commandments on their heart here on earth be happy in heaven?**

Say: **Let's find two more verses together, John 14:15 and Revelation 14:12.** Discuss that we will want God's law written on our hearts if we love Jesus. Those who are waiting for Jesus to come back will be keeping His commandments because they love Him. If possible, read Revelation 14:12 from the King James Version: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

Ask: **How do you think what we have just studied applies to our power point today?**

(God's law is a picture or explanation of His character of love. He is seeking to restore that character in each of His children. Jesus explained and expanded our understanding of the character of God and the principles of His kingdom. If we give Him permission, God, through the Holy Spirit, will write His law of love in our hearts right now, preparing us to be citizens of the kingdom of heaven as we live and grow in grace here on earth.) Say: **Remember our power point:**

God is writing His law of love on our hearts to prepare us for citizenship in heaven.

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

Exploring the Bible

Say: **Let's explore some verses together and find out what the Bible teaches about the people who will be in heaven and those who will not be there.** Write the following verses where all can see, along with two columns with headings "Will" and "Won't." Ask students to read the verses aloud and then discuss what, from that passage, should be put in each of the columns on the board.

1. Ephesians 4:25-5:5
2. Matthew 5:19
3. Matthew 7:21
4. Matthew 18:3
5. Matthew 21:31 (last part), 32
6. John 3:5
7. Revelation 21:25-27

Ask: **What does the list of characteristics of those who will be in heaven tell you? What does the list of those who won't tell you? What are you allowing to happen so that you will be a good citizen of heaven?** Say: **Let's repeat once again our power text, Jeremiah 31:33:**

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33).

As the power point reminds us:

God is writing His law of love on our hearts to prepare us for citizenship in heaven.

Accommodations for students with special needs
Have students with visual impairments sit close to the board for this activity. Alternatively, have a handout for them with the list of Bible references.

Scenarios

Read the following scenarios to the students:

Jason believes that God wants to save everyone, so He will take everyone to heaven and then change them into good citizens. He doesn't think it matters what he does here on earth, because Jesus died for all his sins. He thinks it is OK to (such as: mistreat his little brother and not try to get along with him; spend every cent he can get on video games and not give any offerings; cheat on his homework if he doesn't have time to do it).

On the other hand, your friend Amy is concerned that she might not be ready when Jesus comes to take us to heaven. She worries about breaking the commandments. She even reminds her friends when they have done something wrong. She isn't very much fun to be around.

Debriefing

Ask: **What can you agree with Jason about?** (God wants to save everyone. He will change us and make us perfect when He comes.) **What do you not agree with Jason about?** (God loves us too much to leave us the way we are. He wants to begin changing us now, writing His law on our hearts, teaching us a better way. He does that through His Holy Spirit as we pray and study His Word.) **What can you agree with Amy about?** (Jesus wants us to be ready when He comes. He asks us to keep the commandments.) **What would you like Amy to understand?** (That God asks us to believe in Him and His power to save, that He wants us to trust Him to change us and make us ready. No matter how hard we try, we can't make ourselves ready. He asks us to read the Bible, pray, get to know Him better, and give His Holy Spirit permission to change our lives from the inside out. As we come to love and trust God with all our hearts, He will transform us into people who are more like Him.)

Say: **Let's remember that:**

God is writing His law of love on our hearts to prepare us for citizenship in heaven.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils
- ☐ genuine passport (optional)

Passport for Heaven

Ask students to share if they had the opportunity to discuss with someone what it means to have God's law written on the heart. Ask: **How did you share with someone what it means for you to keep God's law, the Ten Commandments? How is loving God connected to keeping His commandments?**

Have the students fold the paper to make a "passport." The cover should say "Passport" and "Kingdom of Heaven." They may also want to create a symbol for the cover. Inside, have the students draw a small picture of themselves and write their name on one page. On the other, have them copy John 14:15 ("If you love Me, keep My commandments") and Revelation 14:12. ("Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" [KJV]).

Debriefing

Ask: **How do you know you are ready for your citizenship in heaven? Who do you know that needs to be encouraged to choose to be there too? How can you explain to someone that although we are saved by God's grace through the sacrifice of Jesus, keeping God's commandments is a sign of our love and faithfulness to Him?**

Say: **Plan to share with someone specific the fact that they can choose right now to let the Holy Spirit prepare them for their citizenship in heaven. Show them your passport. Let's remember our power point:**

God is writing His law of love on our hearts to prepare us for citizenship in heaven.

Closing

Prayer and Closing Comments:

Say: **Dear God, we love You and want to obey You. We are anxious for heaven, and Your kingdom of love. We want You, please, to continue preparing our hearts, minds, and bodies for our eternal life in heaven. Thank You. 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 defends us against Satan's accusations. By grace He welcomes us to His kingdom in heaven.**

The Ten Commandments said . . .	Jesus said . . .
Exodus 20:3 "You shall have no other gods before me."*	Matthew 4:10 "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only."
Exodus 20:4 "You shall not make for yourself an image."	Luke 16:13 "No one can serve two masters."
Exodus 20:7 "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God."	Matthew 5:34, 35 "Do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool."
Exodus 20:8-10 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. . . . The seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God."	Mark 2:27, 28 "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."
Exodus 20:12 "Honor your father and your mother."	Matthew 10:37 "Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."
Exodus 20:13 "You shall not murder."	Matthew 5:22 "Anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment."
Exodus 20:14 "You shall not commit adultery."	Matthew 5:28 "Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."
Exodus 20:15 "You shall not steal."	Matthew 5:40 "If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well."
Exodus 20:16 "You shall not give false testimony."	Matthew 12:36 "Everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken."
Exodus 20:17 "You shall not covet."	Luke 12:15 "Be on your guard against all kinds of greed."

*Texts in this activity are from the New International Version.

Student lesson

Citizens of the Love Kingdom

When the apostle John and Ellen Harmon had their visions of heaven, do you think they wondered who would be there: who would be prepared to enter and become citizens of God's kingdom?

Brad loved spending time with Uncle Darren, especially when they went out to eat at a restaurant! However, today would be exceptionally meaningful.

"I want to stop by the florist's before we go home," Uncle Darren said. "I want to get some flowers for Aunt Barb."

"Why?" Brad asked. "It's not her birthday or Mother's Day."

"I want to surprise her because she likes flowers," Uncle Darren smiled. "When you love somebody, you want to show that you love and appreciate that person," Uncle Darren explained. "You want to do what makes the other person happy. It's a lot like serving God. In fact, one of the best-known verses in the Bible is Luke 6:31. It's called the golden rule, and it teaches us to do unto others as we would want them to do unto us."

"Would you please explain?" Brad asked.

"Well, let me see . . ." Uncle Darren said thoughtfully. "Do you say 'thank you' when your mom serves a meal or cleans your room?"

"Usually," answered Brad.

"Do you say 'thank you' when the server brings you food or when you're invited to someone's house?" Brad nodded.

"Saying 'thank you' is showing gratitude," Uncle Darren explained. "You see, God's laws are really about how we are to honor God and love others."

Darren listened intently to Uncle Darren.

"Remember the first commandment in Exodus 20? God said, 'You shall have no other gods before Me.' We need to acknowledge God as the only one who deserves our worship and adoration. Anything else that absorbs most of our time, interest, and affections interferes with our love for God. Think about it: if Christians were respectful of God and behaved like Christ, we would be sure to make time for Him and others. We would enjoy serving Him by serving others. We would love Him most and show that love through our actions toward others.

"Through the second commandment we see God's intention to communicate with us as person to person. To worship an image or an object that represents God or Jesus is a violation of His law.

"The meaning of the third commandment is plain. We should never use God's name lightly, carelessly, or casually in our conversations. Our Creator is a holy God whose name we should always pronounce with utmost reverence and respect.

"The fourth commandment bears the seal of God and the mark of His authority as our Creator. The first word of this commandment calls us to remember the Lord's holy day of rest, the seventh-day Sabbath, and to reserve it for worshipping God and nurturing community. The faithful observance of the Sabbath as God's holy day of rest offers opportunities for spending more time with God in prayer, worship, and Bible study, as well as with others through fellowship and community outreach.

"God intended families to be reflections of His love to our world," Uncle Darren continued. "The fifth commandment is the only commandment followed by a promise. God honors those who respect and obey their parents, and promises to bless them with long life."

Brad looked down. "Mom says I take too long to obey, and that dishonors her. She says it wastes a lot of time."

"Ahhh." Uncle Darren looked kindly into the eyes of Brad, then added, "To honor our parents means to obey them even when we don't get our way, because they have our best interest at heart.

"'You shall not murder' means treating everyone with utmost respect, because all human beings are created by God in His image. Jesus also condemned the thoughts and feelings of hatred against others. We can overcome hatred by asking Jesus to fill us with His love. He has taught us by example how to love our enemies [see Matthew 5:44, 45].

"The commandment 'You shall not commit adultery' emphasizes the importance of faithfulness between marriage partners, as well as respect and loyalty to our family members.

"'You shall not steal' means you should not take what is not yours. God calls us to respect the property of others, but also to honor Him with the gifts and talents He has given us. Being wasteful is a form of stealing, because we are robbing God if we are not using wisely the resources

KEY REFERENCES

- Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 22:34-40; John 14:15
- *Patriarch and Prophets*, chap. 27, pp. 303-314
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 2, pp. 153-158; vol. 10, pp. 161-164, 128-131
- Our Beliefs, nos. 19, 14, 11

POWER TEXT

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33).

POWER POINT

God is writing His law of love on our hearts to prepare us for citizenship in heaven.

He has given us, such as time, talents, possessions, and any other gift we have received from Him.

"'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor' means being honest, respectful, and truthful in our relationships. We are never to misrepresent others. We are not to lie or gossip about others. We are to be true in thoughts, words, and actions [see Philippians 4:8; James 3:2].

"Do you recall the tenth commandment? 'You shall not covet' means to be grateful for what you have. It means to resist the temptation to want more or desire the possessions that others have, or what you see advertised, or at the store."

"I think I understand," said Brad. "If I obey God's laws completely, I will think, speak, and behave differently."

Uncle Darren nodded. "Jesus said, 'If you love Me, keep My commandments' [John 14:15].

"Jesus kept God's law throughout His earthly life, leaving an example for us. The Holy Spirit will help us keep God's law, the Ten Commandments. As we honor God and bless others we prepare to one day become citizens of God's kingdom."

Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 61.

Sunday

READ Read Exodus 20:1-11 and this week's story, "Citizens of the Love Kingdom."

LEARN Begin to learn the power text, Jeremiah 31:33.

PRAY Praise God that His Word is a clear guide.

Monday

READ Read Exodus 20:12-17 and John 14:15.

THINK How do the first four commandments describe the relationship with God and the last six the relationship with others?

WRITE Rewrite the Ten Commandments as "10 Ways to Love." Use positive affirmations (i.e., Honor God).

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for His laws that make life happier.

Tuesday

READ Read Matthew 22:34-40.

THINK How do Jesus' two great commandments compare to the ones you rewrote yesterday based on Exodus 20:1-17?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to teach you the principles of His kingdom and to "write" them on your heart.

Wednesday

READ Read Revelation 14:12.

THINK What do you think this verse is talking about? Have you experienced "patient endurance"?

MAKE Every country has a flag. Design a flag for heaven.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to give you the courage to have patient endurance for Him.

Thursday

READ Read John 14:15.

THINK What were your New Year's resolutions? Which resolutions involve your spiritual life? Which ones focus on becoming a better citizen of God's kingdom of love?

TALK Talk to somebody about what it means to remain faithful to Jesus? (See Revelation 14:12.)

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask Jesus to help you focus on Him and remain true to Him in all that you do.

Friday

READ Read Jeremiah 31:33.

TALK Discuss with your family God's commandments. What are the commandments that some people ignore?

THINK What are societies and people like without rules? How do rules really make us happier? How do they help us focus on others instead of ourselves?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God that His law prepares us for citizenship in heaven.