

7

Heaven: A Sneak Preview

Grace

We are heirs of God's kingdom by grace.

POWER TEXT

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:1-3).

KEY REFERENCES

- John 14:1-3
- *Early Writings*, pp. 11-20
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 9, pp. 9-14; vol. 10, pp. 205-208
- Student lesson on page 82 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 18, The Gift of Prophecy
- No. 28, The New Earth
- No. 17, Spiritual Gifts and Ministries

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** heaven is a real place, and God has prepared a place for them there.
- **Feel** confident that God's grace will keep them forever.
- **Respond** by making plans for life forever with Jesus in heaven.



By God's grace we prepare to live with Him forever.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Jesus promises to prepare a home in heaven for those who believe in Him. This is a real home, a permanent home, made possible by (paid for by) grace through Jesus' death on the cross for us. Eternal life is something He puts in us when we believe.

This is a lesson about grace.

In His love and grace God is building a house in heaven with a room for each of us, paid for by Christ at Calvary. As great as heaven is, the real gift is life eternal, being able to live with God forever. Only we can keep ourselves out—by choosing not to go. If we want to go, God guarantees that we can trust Him to get us there.

Teacher Enrichment

The word translated "mansions" in some translations of the Bible would more correctly be translated "a remaining place" or a "place of abode." It does not necessarily imply a building of great size or pretentiousness (see *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1034). The idea of mansions came about in medieval times. Prior to that people thought of themselves as having rooms in God's mansion.

Ellen White, writing about her first vision in the book *Early Writings*, describes homes outside of the city in the earth made new. "There I saw most glorious houses, that had the appearance of silver, supported by four pillars set with pearls most glorious to behold. These were to be inhabited by the saints. In each was a golden shelf. I saw many of the saints go into the houses, take off their glittering crowns and lay them on the shelf, then go out into the field by the houses to do something with the earth; not as we have to do with the earth here; no, no. A glorious light shone all about their heads, and they were continually shouting and offering praises to God" (p. 17).

How does my belief that God has a home prepared for me in heaven affect how I live now? What does "life forever with Jesus" mean to me?

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. Heavenly Plans*	paper, pencils, markers
		B. In My New Home	index cards/paper, pen/pencils
* Prayer & Praise	15-20	See page 77. Prayer & Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, offering bowl/basket/container from overseas culture
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story	
		Experiencing the Story	Bibles, modeling clay or foil for each person OR paper, pencils or markers
		Exploring the Bible	Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Brushing Off the Gnats*	
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Grace Celebrations*	paper, pens/pencils, assorted 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:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils
- ☐ markers

Heavenly Plans

As the students arrive, give each a sheet of paper and ask them to make plans for their own house in the earth made new. They may draw a floor plan or a view of the finished house. Or they can describe their house in words. (Creative option: Provide materials such as rolls of foil, white bedsheets or tablecloths, gold paper, poster board, masking tape, string, angel hair, etc., and let them decorate the classroom to look like heaven.) Allow 15 minutes, if necessary, for them to complete the activity. Then call time and inspect their handiwork.

Debriefing

Ask: **What did you like best about this activity? What frustrated you about the activity? If you really could build a house with some extra features you didn't think of, how would you feel? This is the good news today about heaven. Let's say together our power text, John 14:1-3:**

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:1-3).

Remember our power point:

By God's grace we prepare to live with Him forever.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ index cards/paper
- ☐ pens/pencils

In My New Home

Have enough index cards (or small pieces of paper) for each person in your class. Write "My first day in the new home God has made me, I . . ." at the top of one card. Write "And then . . ." at the top and "but this story never ends!" at the bottom of another card. Write "And then . . ." at the top of all the other cards. Distribute the cards at random among the students and ask them to think about what they would like to do when they get to heaven, and then write it on their card.

When they're finished, gather the cards and put them in a stack with the "My first day" card on top and the "never ends" card on the bottom. It doesn't matter what order the "And then" cards are in. Read the cards aloud to the group. (Large church: Do this activity in groups of 12-15.)

Debriefing

Ask: **Would you REALLY like to do some of these things?** (yes) **Would it be enough if you did them only once?** (no) **twice?** (no) **Why not?** (Because half the fun is being able to enjoy them whenever you want, never having to leave and never losing what you love.) **So how important is living forever? Well, guess what! Just as surely as there's heaven, there's also eternal life. Let's say together our power text, John 14:1-3:**

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:1-3).

Let's repeat the power point together:

By God's grace we prepare to live with Him forever.

Prayer & Praise

Notes

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

"I'm Gonna Sing" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 10)
"Do, Lord" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 107)
"Shine Jesus, Shine" (*Praise Time*, no. 60)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Show pictures from other countries. Say: **Jesus can help us to have a heart for the needs of others. Let's see how our mission to the world is going.** 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 where the mission story is taking place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ container from an overseas culture

If possible, find a basket, bowl, or another object from an overseas culture in which to collect the offering. Say: **Our offerings go to spread the good news about heaven to God's other children. Pray that your offering will tell others that**

By God's grace we prepare to live with Him forever.

Prayer

Say: **Today let's take a partner and kneel together. With your partner, thank God for preparing your special space in heaven and for all your blessings down here. Pray for each other and for the concerns that were already mentioned. In the end I will pray aloud.** 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

Introducing the Bible Story

Ask: **What is your favorite room in your house? How would you want a favorite room in heaven to be similar? How do you think it will be different from the room you now have?** Allow students to share with the entire group or with a partner.

Say: **Ellen White, when she was only 17, had a vision of heaven. God showed her many things and asked her to share what she had seen with others. Our lesson this week offered us insight into what heaven is like based on the vision Ellen White had seen.**

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ modeling clay or foil for each person OR
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils or markers

Experiencing the Story

Have the students read together Revelation 22:1-5 and say the power text, John 14:1-3, from memory. Then hand each person a lump of modeling clay or a piece of foil, instructing them to illustrate some of the things that those who will be saved will experience in heaven.

Debriefing

Ask: **What do you think? Is heaven someplace you want to go someday?** (yes) **Think about the picture of heaven that Ellen White had described. What impresses you most about the earth made new?** (Accept their responses.) **Who was the one who made all this possible?** (Jesus) **This is the exciting thing about grace. We'll be able to enjoy all these things as a result of God's grace. As the power point reminds us:**

By God's grace we prepare to live with Him forever.

YOU NEED:
□ Bibles

Exploring the Bible

Assign the following texts to students.

Say: **While heaven is a real place, a great place, the real gift of heaven is eternal life; only those who have eternal (forever) life can be there.**

1. **What makes it possible for us to live forever?**

John 3:16 (God's love, the cross of Jesus)
Romans 6:23 (the gift of God)
Romans 5:21 (grace)
What do these three texts have in common? (grace)

2. **When does eternal life actually begin?**

John 5:24 (Whoever believes *has it now.*)
1 John 5:13 ("You *have* eternal life.")
Titus 3:7 (We have the *hope* of eternal life.)

Say: **So which is it: do we have it or don't we? William Johnsson, former editor of the *Adventist Review*, explains it this way: "As believers, we have in us now the seed of eternal life that will be realized at the Second Coming."**

3. **What role do we have in our eternal life?**

Titus 3:5 (not by our works, but by God's mercy)
Jude 21 (We *keep ourselves in God's love* by spending time with Him and obeying Him.)

4. **Who is the source of eternal life?**

1 John 5:11 (God's Son)
1 John 5:20 (Jesus "is the true God and eternal life.")

Debriefing

Ask: **How does it feel to know that your Best Friend has eternal life and wants to give it to you? Thanks to the prophetic writings of the apostle John and the vision of Ellen G. White about heaven, we can have some insight into what heaven is like. Let's say together our power text, John 14:1-3:**

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:1-3).

Let's repeat our power point:

By God's grace we prepare to live with Him forever.

Brushing Off the Gnats

Ask: **How do you feel on hot days when gnats or flies are around and you're covered with sweat?**

What do you do to get rid of them? You flick them off. Well, sometimes we need to remember the gnats when people and situations irritate us. We should just figuratively flick them off, because heaven is near and we want to keep our focus on it. Think of something unpleasant that happened to you this week. Maybe you overreacted. Now pretend that that thing is right there in front of you again. Show how big the problem is. (Get them to reach up and outline the size of it.) **That big? Now shut your eyes and imagine heaven as the apostle John and Ellen White described it in their visions. Open your eyes and show me now how big the problem is in light of heaven.** (It should have shrunk; if not, have them shut their eyes and ask God to shrink the problem down to size. Have them picture the problem being reduced to the size of a gnat. Have them imagine that they can pick it up between their thumb and forefinger and place it on the back of their other hand. Then brush it away as they would brush away a gnat.) **Don't let any problem overshadow heaven, OK? And remember the power point:**

By God's grace we prepare to live with Him forever.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens/pencils
- ☐ assorted art supplies

Grace Celebrations

Invite students to share if they had the opportunity to tell someone about heaven. Ask: **What did you share? What are some things that you are excited about doing and seeing in heaven? Did you share with someone what you look forward to experiencing in heaven? What was your friend's response? Were your friends curious to know more about heaven?**

Encourage everyone to choose one way to prepare for and then celebrate heaven with others who do not know about grace. The following are some options:

1. Join a group to make up a rhyme or song about heaven.
2. With a friend, memorize John 14:1-3 so that you can say it for your family.
3. Make a poster about John 14:1-3 that you can post on the door to your room and share with people who ask about it.
4. Make up buttons that read "Ask Me About Home" and wear them. When people ask about the button, tell them about heaven.
5. Make a bug from clay and toothpicks. Put it someplace you see often to remind you and your family to brush away irritations because heaven is so close.

Debriefing

Ask the students to show what they made and how they'll use it to celebrate God's grace. Allow students to share what about heaven is most vivid in their imaginations from the descriptions offered by the apostle John and Ellen White. Say: **Let's repeat once again our power point:**

By God's grace we prepare to live with Him forever.

Closing

Prayer and Closing Comments:

Remind everyone that each of us can choose heaven and eternal life. It is ours if we choose Jesus and ask Him to keep us close to Him. Encourage them to pray every morning and to study more about heaven from the Bible and their Bible study guides. Thank God in prayer for His grace and His forever love.

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: **We are citizens of God's kingdom. By His grace God transforms us into people fit for His kingdom.**

Notes

Student lesson

Heaven: A Sneak Preview

Have you ever dreamed of a new house, or a room of your own? What color would it be? What would be in it? Can you imagine Jesus designing a place just for you?

There was so much Jesus wanted to tell His disciples before He left them. He knew how much they would miss Him after He was gone. Leaning close, He said, "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:1-3). John remembered these words of comfort Jesus had spoken and included them in the Gospel that he wrote. Many centuries later a young girl named Ellen Harmon accepted Jesus as her personal Savior and Friend. One day Jesus chose to give her a vision of what heaven is like.

In her vision Ellen saw Jesus. At the sound of a trumpet He was calling to new life the saints who were dead in their graves. Jesus was coming to earth on a cloud that was wrapped in flames of fire. All His people joined Him in the cloud. They traveled for seven days. At last they arrived and assembled on the sea of glass. Jesus Himself gave a crown to each one of them. Then angels joined the multitude of saints who were redeemed and together they walked across the sea of glass to the gate of the city.

Jesus opened wide a pearly gate with shiny hinges and invited them all in. Inside they saw the magnificent throne of God. A pure river flowed out of the throne. On either side of this river of life was the tree of life. Even though it looked like two trees, it joined at the top and formed one tree. The fruit of this tree had the appearance of gold mixed with silver.

Ellen and others sat down on the riverbank and tried to remember some of the troubles from their days on earth. But they couldn't recall them clearly. Compared to the glorious things they were seeing and feeling, any troubles they had experienced on the earth seemed insignificant.

Then, in Ellen's vision, she and the others went back to the new earth with Jesus. When they looked up, they saw the magnificent Holy City coming down from heaven. Outside of the city Ellen saw houses shining with the glimmer of silver, each sustained by pillars and adorned with pearls. These houses were for the human beings Jesus saved through His sacrifice. Each house had a special shelf for the crowns Jesus had given them. They set their crowns there when they wanted to go out and work in the garden. But even the work in the garden wasn't like it had been before. It wasn't sweaty and tiring. It was enjoyable.

In her vision Ellen saw a field full of all kinds of wonderful flowers. She picked them, knowing that they wouldn't ever fade. In another field were all kinds of animals—lions, lambs, leopards, and wolves—all getting along just fine. She entered woods that were not dark and scary, as woods are now. It was sunny there, bright, and very safe.

On Mount Zion Ellen saw a majestic temple that was supported by seven pillars of transparent gold and decorated with most precious pearls. Surrounding the temple were seven other mountains where roses and lilies grew. Children climbed the mountains and picked the flowers. Sometimes they used their little wings instead of climbing.

Later in her vision Ellen heard Jesus call them all back to the city for supper. When they entered, they saw a table of silver that was miles and miles long. But they could still see the other end. It was already set with fruit from the tree of life, manna, almonds, figs, pomegranates, grapes, and lots of other fruit.

Ellen wanted to stay and eat, but Jesus told her that she must go back to earth and tell others what she had seen. When she awoke from her vision, everything seemed dreary in comparison. Sometimes after that she would be sad and lonely. She wanted to go back where everything had been joy and light.

Ellen saw heaven in a vision. When finally you and I see that land, we will stay and eat of the heavenly fruit. God's grace will keep us forever.

KEY REFERENCES

- John 14:1-3
- *Early Writings*, pp. 11-20
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 9, pp. 9-14; vol. 10, pp. 205-208
- Our Beliefs, nos. 18, 28, 17

POWER TEXT

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:1-3).

POWER POINT

By God's grace we prepare to live with Him forever.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 60.

Sunday

READ Read John 3:16 and this week's story, "Heaven: A Sneak Preview."

DRAW Draw a picture of heaven as Ellen White describes it. Write the power text below your drawing. Begin to learn it.

PRAY Thank God for eternal life available to us in Jesus.

Monday

READ Read Romans 5:21.

REVIEW Review the power text.

THINK Imagine how it will be when we get to heaven and live there forever, not having to return to this earth as Ellen did at the end of her vision.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for eternal life.

Tuesday

READ Read Isaiah 11:6–9.

TALK Phone a friend and share what you hope to do and see in heaven.

REVIEW Repeat the power text, John 14:1–3.

PRAY Pray that you may tell someone about heaven.

Wednesday

READ Read John 5:24 and 1 John 5:13.

THINK When does eternal life actually begin? How does it feel to know that as a believer you have the seeds of eternal life in you?

FIND In whom does eternal life originate? 1 John 5:11; 1 John 5:20.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God that He has planted in you the seeds of eternal life and that living with Jesus can begin now.

Thursday

READ Read 1 Corinthians 2:9 to an adult.

ASK Ask the adult to tell you what this text is saying about heaven. What things in this text excite you about going to heaven?

THINK How can you know that you have the key to heaven? John 3:16; Jude 21.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you accept eternal life.

Friday

READ Read John 14:2: "In My Father's house are many mansions." On a separate sheet of paper, design your own home in heaven. What would you like to have in your house? With whom will you share your home?

REPEAT Say the power text aloud from memory.

PRAISE Thank God that His grace keeps us forever.