

Awaiting the Consummation

God has promised a new heaven and new earth.

Lesson Focus

God has planned what will happen at the end of time. He promised in his Word that believers can look forward to a new heaven and a new earth with no more sin or sadness. It will be a place of beauty where they will enjoy eternity with God. But unbelievers will be separated from God and suffer eternal punishment.

Key Passages

Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:3–5, 18 & 21

Memory Verse

Philippians 3:20–21 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body.

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

God has promised to create a new heavens and a new earth. This new creation was written about in the Old Testament in Isaiah 65:17: “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.” Peter mentions the new creation in the New Testament as well. He speaks of God’s promise of the new heaven and new earth in which righteousness will dwell (2 Peter 3:13). And in the book of Revelation, John’s vision included a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away (Revelation 21:1).

There was a time when God’s original creation was perfect, and he described it as “very good” (Genesis 1:31). But that very good creation did not last long. Adam and Eve sinned, and their sin brought God’s curse of death, disease, and suffering into the world (Romans 5:12). God has promised to restore all things from the wicked, evil, sinful, and dark world we see now to the “very good” state that was the original creation. John got a glimpse of this new creation when he heard a loud voice from heaven proclaiming that the dwelling place of God would be with men. All mourning, death, crying, and pain would pass away. All things would indeed be made

new and good in the presence of God himself (Revelation 21:3–5). This is a glorious hope that believers would have the privilege to stand before the throne of God and spend eternity in a place where there would be no need of sun or moon to shine because the glory of God will be there and the Lamb—Jesus Christ—will be its light (Revelation 21:23).

But the consummation will also include a judgment. All unbelievers—those who never bowed the knee to Jesus Christ and have never repented and trusted Christ completely for their forgiveness and salvation—will be judged according to their works. Their works are as polluted garments before the holy, Creator God (Isaiah 64:6). Their names will not appear in the book of life (Revelation 20:15). These unbelievers will be known as cowardly, faithless, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and liars. God has ordained that they will finally have their part in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur forever and ever (Revelation 21:8).

Jesus Christ came to earth as the perfect sacrifice, the righteous for the unrighteous, that sinners may come into the presence of God through his righteousness. God’s Word says that whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God (John 3:18).

Historical/Apologetics Background

There have been many books written by those who supposedly went to heaven and returned to tell us about it. Their stories are full of specific details about what heaven is like, who is there, and what is happening in the celestial realm. But when we compare their claims with Scripture, it becomes clear that they are merely figments of the human imagination, not true visions of heaven as it is described in God’s Word.

These accounts say comparatively little about God or his glory. But the glory of God is what the Bible says fills, illuminates, and defines heaven. Instead, the authors of these stories seem obsessed with details like how good they felt—how peaceful, how happy, how comforted they were; how they received privileges and accolades; how fun and enlightening their experience was; and how many

things they think they now understand perfectly that could never be gleaned from Scripture alone. In short, they glorify self while barely noticing God’s glory.

There is simply no reason to believe anyone who claims to have gone to heaven and returned. John 3:13 says, “No one has ascended to heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.” And John 1:18 says, “No one has ever seen God.”

Four biblical authors had visions of heaven—Isaiah, Ezekiel, Paul, and John. Three of these men later wrote about what they saw—and the details they gave were comparatively sparse (Isaiah 6:1–4; Ezekiel 1, 10; Revelation 4–6). They all focused properly on God’s glory. They also mentioned their own fear and shame in the presence of such glory. They had nothing to say about the mundane features that are so

prominent in modern tales about heaven (things like picnics, games, juvenile attractions, familiar faces, odd conversations, and so on). Paul gave no actual description of heaven but simply said what he saw would be unlawful to utter.

We need to accept the boundaries that God himself has put on what he has revealed. It is dangerous to listen to anyone who claims to know more about God, heaven, angels, or the afterlife than God himself has revealed to us in Scripture.

It is, however, right and beneficial for Christians to fix their hearts on heaven (Colossians 3:1–2; 2 Corinthians 4:18; Philippians 3:20). Such a perspective is the essence of true faith, according to Hebrews

11. Those with authentic, biblical faith acknowledge that they are strangers and exiles on this earth (v. 13), seeking a heavenly homeland (v. 14) and desiring the city God has prepared for them (v. 16), the heavenly Jerusalem.

No matter how much they might obsess over what heaven is like, people who fill their heads with fantastic or delusional ideas from others' near-death experiences have not truly set their minds on things above. Since the inerrant biblical truth God has given us is the only reliable knowledge about heaven we have access to, that is what should grip our hearts and minds, not the dreams and speculations of human minds.

Review Questions

K–1st Review Questions

1. What is the seventh C, which is God's plan for the end of history? *Consummation.*
2. Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, which Old Testament prophet wrote about the promise of a new heaven and new earth: Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Nehemiah? *Isaiah.*
3. The prophet Isaiah said the former things, the first heaven and earth, would or would not be remembered? *They would not be remembered.*
4. Who will live with the people in the new heaven and earth? *God himself, Jesus.*
5. How will the new creation be like the first creation before sin came in? *It will be very good.*
6. Name one of the things that WON'T be in the new creation. (Ask several students.) *Sin, death, sadness, crying, or pain.*
7. Which apostle saw a vision of the new heaven and earth? *John.*
8. Where was John sent as a punishment for his faith in Jesus: to prison, to an island, or to the mountains? *To an island (Patmos).*
9. In which New Testament book did John write about his vision of the new heaven and new earth: 1 John or Revelation? *Revelation.*
10. The Apostle John saw a vision of a beautiful city made of gold, silver, or bronze? *Gold.*
11. What were the gates of the city made of: rubies, diamonds, or pearls? *Pearls.*
12. Will anything evil come into this city or will it be perfect? *No evil will ever come in. It will be perfect.*
13. How long will God's children get to live with him in the new creation? *Forever.*
14. Which people will not be with God in the new creation? *Those who do not turn from sin and believe in Jesus to be saved.*
15. Why does God have to punish sin? Is it because he is: eternal and gracious or holy and just? *Because he is holy and just.*
16. How did God show his love and mercy to sinners? *He sent Jesus to die for sinners so they could be forgiven.*

Pre-K Review Questions

1. What is the seventh C, which is God's plan for the end of history: Cross or Consummation? *Consummation.*
2. Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, which Old Testament prophet wrote about the promise of a new heaven and new earth: Isaiah or Jeremiah? *Isaiah.*
3. The prophet Isaiah said the first heaven and earth would or would not be remembered? *They would not be remembered.*
4. Who will live with the people in the new heaven and earth? *God himself, Jesus.*
5. How will the new creation be like the first creation before sin came in? *It will be very good.*
6. Which of these things WON'T be in the new creation: love, joy, or sin? *Sin.*
7. Since we won't have anything to cry about, what will Jesus wipe away? *Every tear.*
8. Which apostle saw a vision of the new heaven and earth: John, Peter, or Matthew? *John.*
9. In which New Testament book did John write about his vision of the new heaven and new earth: 1 John or Revelation? *Revelation.*
10. John told of a beautiful city made of gold or silver? *Gold.*
11. Will anything evil come into this city or will it be perfect? *No evil will ever come in. It will be perfect.*
12. How long will God's children get to live with him in the new creation? *Forever.*
13. Which people will not be with God in the new creation? *Those who do not turn from sin and believe in Jesus to be saved.*
14. Who will be able to live with God in the new creation? *Those who turn from sin and believe in Jesus to be saved.*

Heavenly City Activity Sheet

Materials

- ☐ Heavenly City pictures (page 2) printed on card stock
- ☐ Crayons or markers
- ☐ Jewel stickers
- ☐ Gold glitter
- ☐ Cotton balls
- ☐ Glue
- ☐ Optional: bowls and small paintbrushes or cotton swabs for glue

Instructions

Print one Heavenly City picture on card stock for each student. Have students color the city yellow or gold and use other colors for the wall of jasper and the gems in it.

Have students decorate their colored picture with jewel stickers and glitter. Then glue on cotton balls for the clouds. Use bowls for students to share glue and spread it with paintbrushes or cotton swabs. Allow the glue to dry.

Suggested Discussion

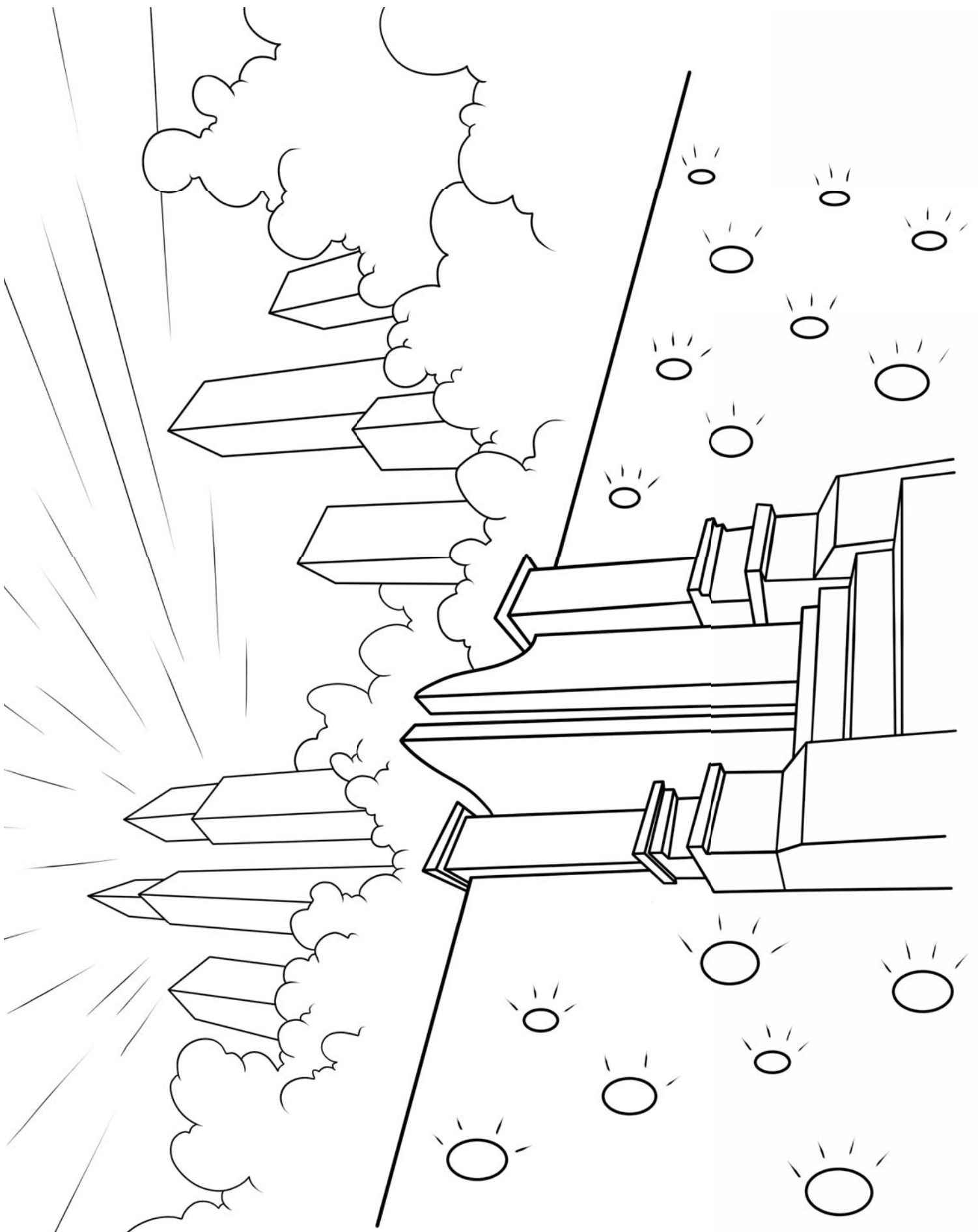
- ?** The Apostle John saw a vision of the city of heaven. What was the city made of? *Gold.*

The city was shiny gold—even the streets.

- ?** What other beautiful things did John see that decorated the foundations of the walls around the city? *Jewels. Gemstones.*

The walls were made of colorful jasper stone with all kinds of jewels, and the gates were made of giant pearls!

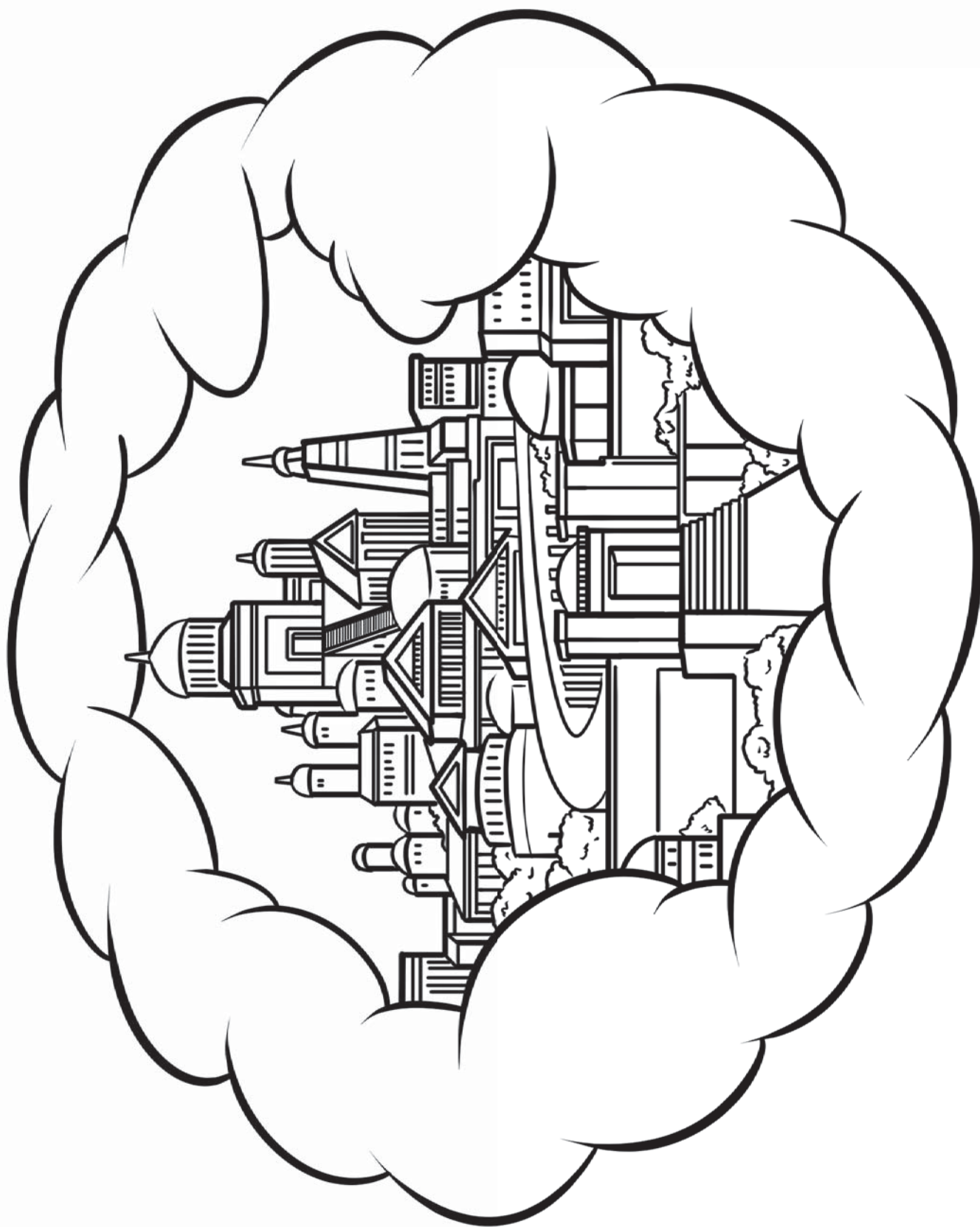
It sounds like heaven will be so wonderful, we just can't imagine it. But for those who know Jesus as their Savior, this beautiful place will be their home someday!



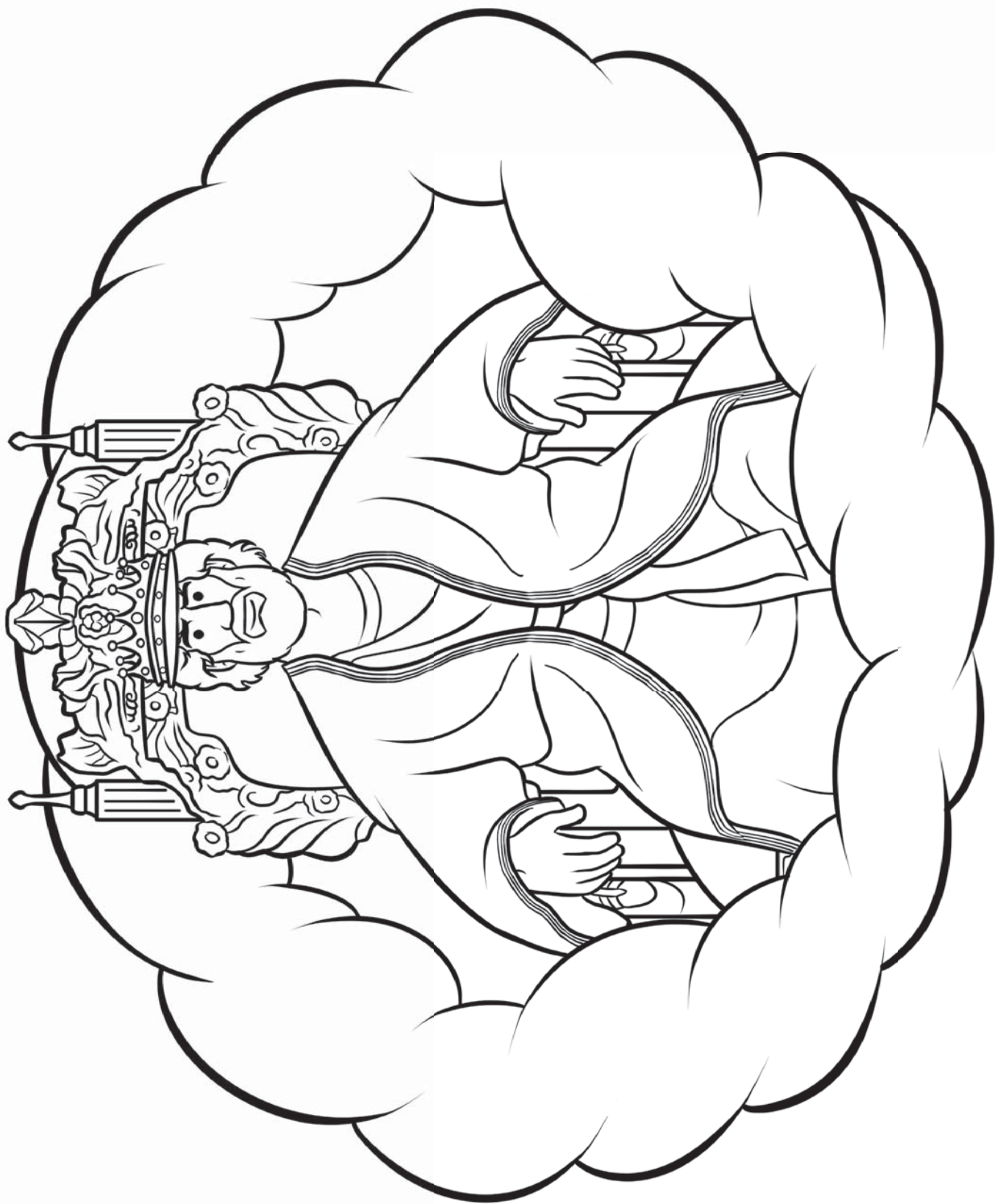
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Name _____



Name _____



Lesson Review Games

These games are written for team play, however, they can easily be adapted for smaller classes.

Allow students to refer to the Flip Chart during the games.

Basket Toss

Students give the correct answer and toss the beanbags. Each basket has greater points.

Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ One beanbag for each team
- ☐ Three laundry baskets or boxes
- ☐ Masking tape

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use masking tape to make a tossing line. Bring in three baskets or boxes. Set the baskets in a line, with each one a little

farther from the tossing line. Label the baskets with 5, 10, and 25 points so the farther away it is the higher the score.

Divide the class into two or more teams depending on size. Have the teams line up at the tossing line. Take turns asking the first students in line from each team a review question. When a student answers correctly, he will have a chance to toss a beanbag into a basket then go to the end of the line. If the beanbag misses, there are no points scored. If someone does not answer correctly, he may ask his teammates for help. Keep track of the scores on the board. Continue until all the questions have been answered. Repeat questions if necessary.

Board Game

Teams will answer questions and make their way to the Finish on the Game Board.

Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ Game Board (provided in the Teacher Kit)
- ☐ Dice, numbered cards, or spinner
- ☐ Buttons or other small items as game pieces for each team

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into teams. Team members will take turns answering the review questions. If they answer correctly, they will roll the dice, spin, or draw a numbered card and move that number of spaces on the Game Board. Follow the directions on the spaces to move ahead, fall back, or switch places with another team. If someone does not know or does not answer correctly, he may ask his teammates for help. Alternate between teams as long as time permits, repeating questions if necessary. The first team to make it all the way to the end wins.

Bowling

What do you do with extra water bottles and softballs? Go bowling, of course. Students will answer questions then bowl for points.

Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ Six to ten empty water bottles
- ☐ Softball or other small playground ball
- ☐ Masking tape
- ☐ Dried corn or beans (optional)

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Pour a small amount of dried corn or beans into the bottom of each

water bottle and tighten the lid. Set out the water bottles on one end of the room. Use masking tape to form a "lane."

Divide students into teams. Have students line up. Ask the first student a review question. If he answers correctly, let him roll the ball toward the bottles. Each bottle that is knocked down is worth 1 point. A strike (knocking down all the bottles) is worth 20 points. Take turns asking questions of each team. If a student gives an incorrect answer or does not know the answer, he can ask his teammates for help. Keep track of the scores.

Football Frenzy

Who can score the most touchdowns?

Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ Football Cutouts, one per team
- ☐ Tape or poster putty

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions. Print and cut one Football Cutout for each team. Color them different colors for each team, or have teams choose and write a name on their football. On the board draw 6 vertical lines and label them 50, 40, 30, 20, 10, and End Zone to represent yard lines on a football field. Make the lines long enough so there is room for the footballs to be placed along them with room in between. Divide the class into teams. Place

each team's football at the 50-yard line using tape or poster putty on the back.

Alternate asking review questions to each team. If the answer is correct, move the team's football to the next yard line toward the End Zone. If the answer is incorrect, the team's football stays where it is. If a student is unsure of the answer, he may "pass" the question to a teammate to answer. Only one pass per question is allowed, and this does not affect the order of the questions being asked on the team.

When a team's football reaches the End Zone, they have scored a touchdown worth 6 points, and the team's football is placed back at the 50-yard line on the next turn. Keep track of scores on the board.

Continue asking questions and moving the teams' footballs until all the questions are asked or for a set time. You may repeat questions as necessary. At the end, the team with the most points wins.

Musical Questions

When the music stops, who will answer the question?

Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ Chairs
- ☐ Worship music
- ☐ Different color/style chair, masking tape, colored paper, etc.

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions. Set up chairs either in a circle or in two rows back to back so students have room

to walk around them. Mark one chair as the "question" chair (use a different color/style chair or mark it with tape, a paper question mark, etc.)

Instruct students to walk in front of the chairs when you play the music. When the music stops, they will race to find a seat. The student in the question chair answers a review question. Continue playing music and having students change seats until all the review questions are answered.

Racetrack

Who will reach the checkered flag first?

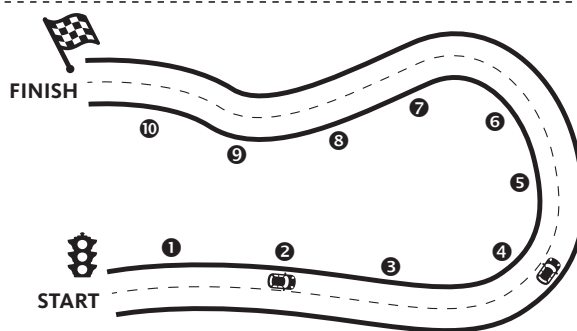
Materials

- ☐ Review Questions
- ☐ White board or chalk-board
- ☐ Markers/chalk
- ☐ Optional: paper cutouts for each team (cars, animals, circles, etc.), tape/poster putty

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions. Draw a racetrack on the board. It may be as simple as a straight horizontal path or a curvy circle. Label "Start" and "Finish" (with a checkered flag) at either end of the track. Add numbers along the track (e.g., 1-10) at equal intervals between Start and Finish. The numbers will be used as placement points for the racers as they progress along the track.

Divide the class into teams. You may draw a different symbol (e.g., stick figure, circle, X or O) to represent each



team at the Start, or use paper cutouts as team markers and stick them to the board with tape/poster putty.

Ask the first team a review question. If they answer correctly, move their marker or redraw their symbol along the track at #1. If they answer incorrectly, give the next team a chance to answer and move to the first number. If they do not know, give the answer and ask that question again later. Continue to alternate asking review questions and moving teams' markers along the racetrack according to the numbers along the track. The first team to reach the Finish wins!

Memory Verse Games

Allow students to refer to the Flip Chart Memory Verse Page during the games.

You may want to cover it up after a few weeks for more of a challenge.

Echo! Echo!

Do what I do—say what I say! Groups will echo each other as they recite the memory verse together.

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page

Instructions

Divide the class into two groups. You will say a word or phrase of the memory verse while doing some sort of action—sit down, stand up, spin in a circle, touch your toes, etc. The groups will take turns “echoing” what you say and do as you recite the verse. Repeat several times. You can whisper, shout, squeak, etc. Switch around and let older students take turns leading.

Egg Hunt

Hunt for all the parts of the memory verse hidden in the eggs! This game can be played all year round. The plastic eggs just happen to be great little containers that can be hidden easily.

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Strips of paper
- ☐ Plastic Easter eggs

Instructions

Write the memory verse on strips of paper with one or two words on each strip. Put one strip inside of each plastic Easter egg. Hide all the eggs around the room.

Have the students search for the eggs and bring them back to the table. They will open the eggs and work together to put the verse in the proper order.

For a larger class, prepare more than one set of eggs (sorted by colors for different teams). Students can work in teams to collect and construct the verse.

Follow the Leader

Follow the leader around the room. Say the verse and do the motion before moving on.

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Follow the Leader Cards
- ☐ Tape

Instructions

Print and cut out the Follow the Leader Cards. Tape each one to a chair or table and randomly place them around the room. You will lead the students around the room and stop at each card. Read the card and lead the children to do what the card says while reciting the memory verse. Then move around to the next one. You may want to repeat this activity or have students take turns leading.

Freeze!

Stomp like a dinosaur or spin in circles, but when it's time to freeze, get ready to say the memory verse.

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page

Instructions

Students will move around the room in a specified action you give, such as crawling, skipping, turning in circles, galloping, walking in giant steps, etc. Then when you say, "Freeze!" the students will stop and freeze in position. Recite the memory verse, then begin again with a different action. You may need to show them how to freeze and hold a position.

Funny Voices

Recite the memory verse together using different voices. Be squeaky like a mouse or whisper as quietly as you can. How many voices can you do?

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Funny Voice Strips
- ☐ Container

Instructions

Print and cut out one set of the Funny Voice Strips and put them into a container. Choose a student to draw out a strip and lead the whole class in reciting the memory verse using that kind of voice. Have fun with it and repeat several times choosing a new voice each time!

Sneaky Stickies

Students will try to be sneaky as they cover up the words and pictures of the memory verse!

Materials

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Sticky notes

Instructions

Open the Flip Chart to the Memory Verse Page. Recite the verse together then choose a student to place a sticky note over one word, phrase, or picture on the Flip Chart. Recite the verse again, including the part that is covered up. Continue to choose students to place stickies, one at a time, reciting the whole verse between each turn—including the words/pictures that are covered. When all of the words/pictures are covered up, try to say the whole verse together!