

PK/K and 1/2/3 – Extra Lesson: What is Heaven like?

Main Objective: To begin a conversation with the kids about heaven and death, filled with love, understanding and gentleness.

Objectives:

1. For the kids to hear the words of Jesus regarding the kingdom of heaven.
2. To give the kids a safe space to discuss their fears and hopes, and to ask difficult questions.
3. To send the children home with a tangible illustration of the hope of heaven and the treasure waiting for us all there.

As the children enter, the assistant will help them find their name and place a star by their name on the attendance chart as well as one on their name tag.

Arrival Activity:

There will be some wooden blocks. Have the kids work together to build a marvelous mansion. While they are working, ask the following questions:

What does your house look like?

Who lives there?

What does your dream house look like?

This week there will be clergy with you in the room, make sure they are introduced to each child as they enter the room so that the child knows who they are and has time to become comfortable with them.

Do not let the parents leave until you have told them about the lesson. Give them the opportunity to stay in the room with their child if they feel it is necessary.

Gather the children on the rug and start the class by reciting the *Children's Creed* in call and answer format. Then have one child roll the *Prayer Cube*. Read the prayer that lands on top.

Tell the story:

The story below is to be remembered, not memorized. You can use it as an outline and a suggestion of how to word things for the younger kids.

People would come from all around to see Jesus because he would say the most wonderful things and he would do the most amazing things.

Once he told the people:

¹⁹"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Ask them what the word "treasure" means. Once you have agreed on a definition, talk to the children about how everything we have will eventually be gone, but God and heaven will always be there. We grow out of clothes, we wear out shoes, and we use up crayons and markers, but heaven is forever. Everyone dies, but they get to go to heaven and be with God there. That is our treasure

1 a (1) : wealth (as money, jewels, or precious metals) stored up or hoarded
<buried treasure> (2) : wealth of any kind or in any form : riches b : a store of money in reserve
2 : something of great worth or value; also : a person esteemed as rare or precious
3 : a collection of precious things

Another time, people asked Jesus where he was going after he died. He said:

¹"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going." (John 14:1-4)

Wondering:

Instead of asking direct questions at this point, make it a little less tense and use 'wondering'.

Say:

I wonder what Jesus meant when he talked about his Father's house?

I wonder what Jesus was talking about when he said he was going to prepare a room for us?

I wonder how we get to that house?

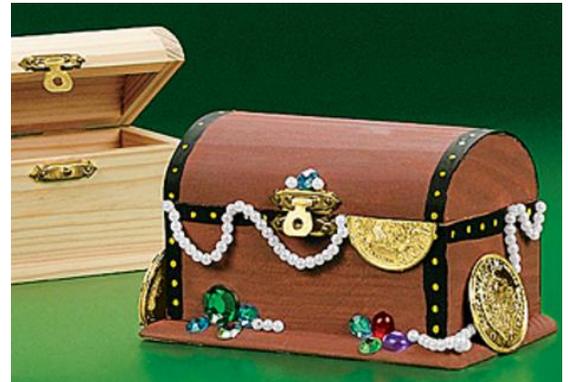
Activity #1: Shared experiences

As the children wonder about heaven, ask them who they think they will see there. If they don't know a person or a pet who has died, you can mention someone in your life, someone you love and are so happy to know is waiting for you in that big house.

Activity #2: Treasure Boxes

Each child will get a plain treasure chest. (like the one shown here, but unpainted).

Have them use markers, stickers, glue and other art supplies to put images of heaven on them. They may want to draw what they think it looks like, who might be there, etc. They may want to just use symbols of God and the church. Encourage creativity and thinking "outside the box."



Activity #3: Fill the Box

There will be small paper hearts, enough so that each child can have a few.

Talk to the children about those treasures they are storing up for themselves in heaven. What are the things that are loved and precious to them, and will be in heaven. A few examples: family, friends, emotions (love, happiness, joy), pets, etc.

Encourage them to keep their treasure boxes somewhere special where they can add to it thoughts and prayers that remind them of heaven.

Closing Prayer:

As a closing prayer, dedicate the boxes to God and to being a reminder that Jesus loves us and has prepared a place for us.