

What About Eternity?

Lesson 19a — There is a Heaven and a Hell

Lesson 19b — The Rich Man and Lazarus

Lesson 19c — The Sheep and the Goats

Lesson 19d — The Men Who Made Excuses

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this unit is to establish clearly in the students' minds that there are two places where eternity will be spent, and that every person will be in one place or the other. They will be taught that eternity is unending, that it will last forever.

The first lesson of the unit should stress the fact that Heaven and Hell are both literal places, not figurative or imaginary in any sense. The description of both places should be as vivid a portrayal as possible.

The second lesson uses the story of the rich man and Lazarus to illustrate the thought that once a person is in Heaven or Hell, there is no change possible. Your students should recognize the finality of this eternal destination.

Emphasis for the third Sunday will be the thought of choices. As you talk about the choices we make here

on earth, your students should be able to see how these choices are the determining factor in where eternity will be spent.

The concluding lesson brings out the fact that many will miss the joys of Heaven because they chose to make excuses. Your class should realize that God will accept the excuses given.

This is an important quarter because the issue of where we spend eternity is the most crucial one we will face in our entire lifetime on earth. Primary children are not too young to become aware of this. In fact, these early years are the prime time to approach this subject as their hearts are tender toward the Lord and His teachings. As you work with your children on this unit, be sure to make clear that the time to begin preparation for eternity is now.

GAMES FOR REVIEW

On a board in front of your group have two ladders (one for boys — one for girls) with clouds, mansions, or just a printed word indicating Heaven. This could be a flannel board so a marker can be advanced up the ladder. Or draw the ladders on a blackboard and shade in the progress. Have questions prepared in advance to ask the students, alternating boys and girls. The team to reach "Heaven" first wins. (Be sure to prepare ample questions to reach the top of the ladders.)

Give each child a copy of the review maze (see Patterns), a pencil, and some crayons. Let them work in groups or singly to complete the maze.

Make a Bible Review Top (see Patterns) to reinforce the lessons studied in this unit. Cut out the top and fold all broken lines to the inside. Glue matching sections of

the top together, starting with flap A and side A. When the top is finished, push a pencil through the circle on the top and let the lead show through the point at the bottom. Have your students take turns spinning the top. When it stops, the pupil should try to tell something about the lesson facing him. The top is then passed to another player.

Make a list of review questions concerning this unit. Cut out a number of the letters Q and A (see Patterns). On the Q's write the questions. On the A's write the answers. Distribute both sets to your group. Call those with questions to the front. As the student reads his question aloud, the one who thinks he has the correct answer goes forward and stands in front of the one with the question. He then reads the answer. If he has a wrong answer, he sits down and the question is read again.

CONTEST IDEAS

Have each child prepare a note (teacher may help) with the following information and place it into a balloon:

My name is _____. I am a student of the Primary Department of the Apostolic Faith Sunday School. (Church Address) _____ (Church phone number) _____.

A prize will be given to the child whose balloon travels the most distance. I would like to share one of our memory verses with you. It is: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." — Matthew 6:20

Please contact (enter name of Sunday school department leader, pastor, teacher, etc.) at phone number _____, as soon as possible. There is no need to give your name unless you wish — just the area where the balloon is found.

If possible, rent a helium tank, fill balloons and let the children release them from the parking lot. Or they could put their notes into a balloon at Sunday school and take them home for parents to help send up.

Give a prize to each child who is able to sing all memory verses of the month, while using the hand signs that go with each verse.

BULLETIN BOARDS

In bright letters write HEAVEN across the top of the board. Underneath that divide the board into two parts. Title these parts, "What Must I Do to Get There?" and "What Will Be There?" Under the subtitles, pin appropriate pictures of what it is going to take to get to Heaven and what it will be like.

Make a big question mark that goes from the top of the board to the bottom and place it in the center of the board. In the center of one side so that it plainly stands out write the word HEAVEN. On the other side write the word HELL. Surround the words with pictures or diagrams of what both places will be like. Let the children decide for themselves where they want to go.

Using a background of light blue, enlarge the picture of

Heaven to fill about ¼ of the board (see Patterns). Use sequins, glitter, and fluorescent felt pens to highlight and give sparkle. The open Bible should be quite large and the letters of the desired color. The pathway could be gold or yellow ribbon, seam binding, rickrack or paper garland. Use cotton or angel hair for clouds. Make flames of yellow or orange paper, highlighted with red crayon, or cellophane if available.

UNIT SONGS

"In My Father's House Are Many Mansions" from 1st quarter lessons

"We're Marching to Zion"

"ABC" song talks about an eternal home

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

"Gospel Express"

"Heaven Is a Wonderful Place"

"Mansion Over the Hilltop"

CHART IDEAS

Your chart will feature the picture of Heaven in the upper right corner and the words HEAVEN IS A HAPPY PLACE in the left half (see Patterns). Below that is a picture of Jesus and a child. Along the bottom, spaces are provided for the six symbols. Write in the following words: No night; No sickness; No crying; No owies; No hunger; No sadness. Allow your students to add symbols for different things: bringing friend, attendance, bringing Bible, etc.

The bulletin board idea with the Bible and path to Heaven could easily be adapted to a chart.

Prepare a mansion chart for each child (see Patterns). Each Sunday let them add different sections to their mansions: roof for attendance, window for memory work, door for bringing Bible, etc.

SUPPORT MATERIAL

What Happens When We Die? — by Carolyn Nystrom, Gospel Publishing House

If I Should Die/If I Should Live — by J. Marxhausen, Concordia

NOTES

TEXT Revelation 21:10-27; 22:1-5; Mark 9:42-48

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to describe Heaven and Hell, and to summarize what determines in which place a person will spend eternity.

MEMORY VERSE Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. — Matthew 6:20

There is a Heaven and a Hell

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

LAY UP — Hold left hand out, palm up; with one sweeping motion move back of right fingertips from left heel of hand to left fingertips.

FOR YOURSELVES — Make hitch-hiker's thumb with right hand, touch abdomen as though to make a thumbprint.

TREASURES — Extend left cupped hand, palm down; bring right fingertips and thumb together and move right hand under left hand.

IN HEAVEN — Wave arm left to right, pointing up, looking up.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

Cut apart the three "treasures" with portions of the Scripture verse written on them. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Display the pieces a section at a time, as the students learn the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Open your class session by illustrating the choices we make every day. Display a number of objects relating to some of these. (See *Preschool Suggestions* for details.) Bring out that the most important choice we make is where we will spend eternity.

1. Give a description of the beauty of Heaven.
2. Tell who will be there.
3. Explain who will not be able to go to Heaven, and tell why.
4. Describe the place where those who don't go to Heaven will have to go.

Climax: Describe the descent of the New Jerusalem.

Conclusion: God is preparing an indescribably beautiful home for those who love Him, and we must be sure that we are ready to spend eternity there.

Response: The students should be able to tell a number of specific aspects of Heaven and Hell, and to relate what determines in which place a person will spend eternity.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The term "heaven" is used in Scripture to refer to three

different things. It frequently refers to the sky or atmosphere as in Psalm 78:23-26 and Isaiah 55:10. It also refers to outer space or the place of the sun, moon, and stars, as in Genesis 1:1 and 1:15. However, Paul said that he was caught up into the "third heaven" referring to the eternal and perfect dwelling place of God and other heavenly beings (II Corinthians 12:2).

Jesus promised to return and take His followers to the place that He would prepare in His Father's house (John 14:1-4). The Holy City described in Revelation 21:10-27 and 22:1-5 combines the characteristics of the Garden of Eden, Jerusalem, and the Temple. Its most noteworthy characteristic, however, is that "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb" (Revelation 21:22) will dwell eternally with those who have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (See Revelation 7:14-17.) Anyone who is impure is barred from entering that place (Revelation 21:27).

The term "hell" in Scripture is translated from three words: the Hebrew word "Sheol" and the Greek words "Hades" and "Gehenna." Sheol and Hades are synonymous and refer to "the place of the dead." Although it is sometimes translated "the grave" or "pit" it does not refer to a literal grave but to the abode of the spirits of those who have departed this life, an intermediate state between death and resurrection. It seems evident that "Hades" is divided into two compartments, one for the righteous, a place of bliss referred to as "Abraham's bosom" in other Jewish writings, and one for the wicked, a place of torment. (See Psalms 16:10 and 9:17.)

"Gehenna," the third word translated as Hell is derived from the name of a valley outside of Jerusalem where the apostate Jews practiced child sacrifice to the god Molech, and later during a reformation, King Josiah converted it into a place of defilement where dead bodies and refuse from the city were burned. The word was adopted by the Jews and also by Jesus to mean the place of eternal punishment for the wicked after the resurrection of the dead and is synonymous with the

"lake of fire." Revelation 20:14 reads "death and hell (Hades) were cast into the lake of fire."

The Biblical doctrine of Hell is not derived only from the Scriptures where this word is used but from many other references where Christ used terms like "unquenchable fire," "the blackness of darkness," "the furnace of fire," "where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched" and "the place prepared for the devil and his angels."

Whether we take these descriptions literally or not it is certain that the real terrors of Hell will surpass any we can imagine.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Give each child a piece of paper with a simple outline of Heaven on it. Give them crayons, glue, glitter, or whatever you may have that would be suitable. Have them decorate Heaven as they think it will be. Cut out each picture and put them on the board. Tell the children the Bible says we can't imagine what Heaven is like.

To illustrate Heaven, bring to class small boxes of various sizes, covered with foil. Add construction-paper doors/windows. Decorate with glitter. Assemble in a city-like setting using gold paper for ground and streets. Use to describe Heaven.

Cut a city from paper and mount on a file folder (see Patterns). Opening the folder causes a 3-D city to appear. Color the city using lots of glitter or glitter pens to show the beauty of Heaven. Make a second folder to represent Hell.

QUESTIONS

Tell what you think Heaven will look like.

Tell about the tree of life.

Who do you want to see in Heaven?

Talk about the most beautiful place you have ever seen on this earth. How did you feel when you first saw this place? How do you think you will feel when you see Heaven?

Do you think there will be churches in Heaven? Why?

Name some things that will not be in Heaven.

How can we "lay up" treasures in Heaven?

How do we get to Heaven?

People will not have to wear glasses in Heaven. Why?

Why is it important that you have your name written in "God's Book"?

What do you think you will like most about Heaven?

In the Bible who tells us what Hell is like? Mark 9:42-50

Tell what you think Hell will be like.

Why is there a Hell?

How can you make sure you don't go to Hell?

What can you do to help others so they won't go to Hell?

People can choose whether they want to go to Heaven or Hell. Explain.

Why should the devil be thrown into Hell?

If all people have to do to escape Hell is to give their lives to Jesus, why don't they? How can we help them?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

At the beginning of the unit bring a large picture, scene, or some representation of Heaven with a picture of Jesus in the center. Each week let the students add something they would like to see in Heaven. Maybe these can be found in stickers or cut from greeting cards: flowers, birds, trees, smiling faces, angels. At some point, at least by the end of the unit, cut up a class picture and put each of their faces on the picture. This could be something to do together in class and could also be displayed on the bulletin board.

Make a shadow box of Heaven and one of Hell, with hinged flaps which lift up to show what is in each place. The Heaven shadow box should be decorated with glitter and shiny foil, and the pictures could be of angels, crowns, pretty flowers, etc. The Hell shadow box could be made with orange construction paper to represent flames. Under the flaps should be sad faces, crying faces, and sin-spotted hearts.

Use two heart-shaped candy boxes, one beautifully decorated and one sprayed black. Put pictures of good behavior in the beautiful box. Put pictures of bad behavior in the other box.

To illustrate to your preschoolers the choices we make every day, show a number of objects. We choose to eat cookies or dirt. We choose to put sugar or pepper on our cereal. We choose to wear a sweater or a swimsuit. We decide which one to choose by which one we like, or which one makes the most sense. We also choose where we will spend eternity. Show a picture of Hell

(flames and sad faces) and Heaven (mansions and golden streets).

REVIEW IDEAS

Place two chairs in front of your group. Have one chair represent earth and the other represent Heaven. Arrange chairs so there is a gap between the two. That gap is sin, it separates us from Heaven. No one may pass, on their own strength. Stretch a string from one chair to the other, explaining that some people think they can go to Heaven by only doing good things, but that will not hold a person up. Now place a cross between chairs so that it bridges the gap and explain to the students that Jesus died on the cross so that we are able to have our sins forgiven and go to Heaven.

Bring a large map (or atlas) of the Holy Land on which you have marked several places mentioned in the Bible — countries, areas, cities, rivers, etc., choosing those with which the children will be most familiar. Bring also some news headlines or news briefs regarding these same places. Bring out to the children the fact that they can read about the same places in the Bible that they hear about in the news. Then read off names of some of the places and ask such questions as "Have you ever been in Jerusalem? Have you been on the Sea of

Galilee? Have you crossed the River Jordan? Been in Bethlehem?" Then ask, "Well, if you haven't seen it does that mean it is not there?" Conclude with the fact that the Bible tells us about Heaven, and also Hell. Just as sure as the other places mentioned in the Bible are real, so are Heaven and Hell.

Put together a slide show illustrating what happens to earthly treasures. The slides could show a new house and an old house; a new car and a smashed, rusted car; money and an empty wallet, etc.

COORDINATING SONGS

"Heaven Is a Wonderful Place"

"Gospel Express"

"Happy Day Express"

"1,2,3, the Devil's After Me"

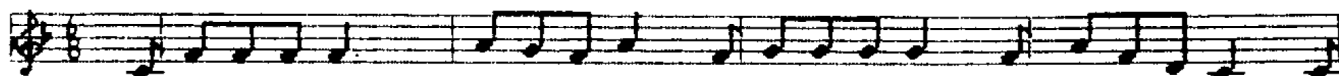
SUPPORT MATERIAL

Heaven . . . How to Get There — Visualized story, Children's Evangelism Fellowship

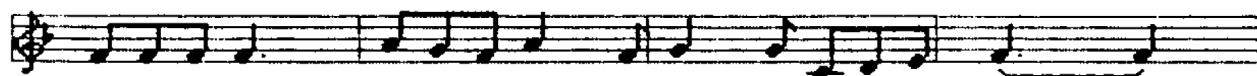
Where Is Heaven? — by Sandra Ziegler, Standard Publishing

Dear God, Where Do You Live? — by Anne Fitzgerald, Augsburg

MEMORY VERSE SONG

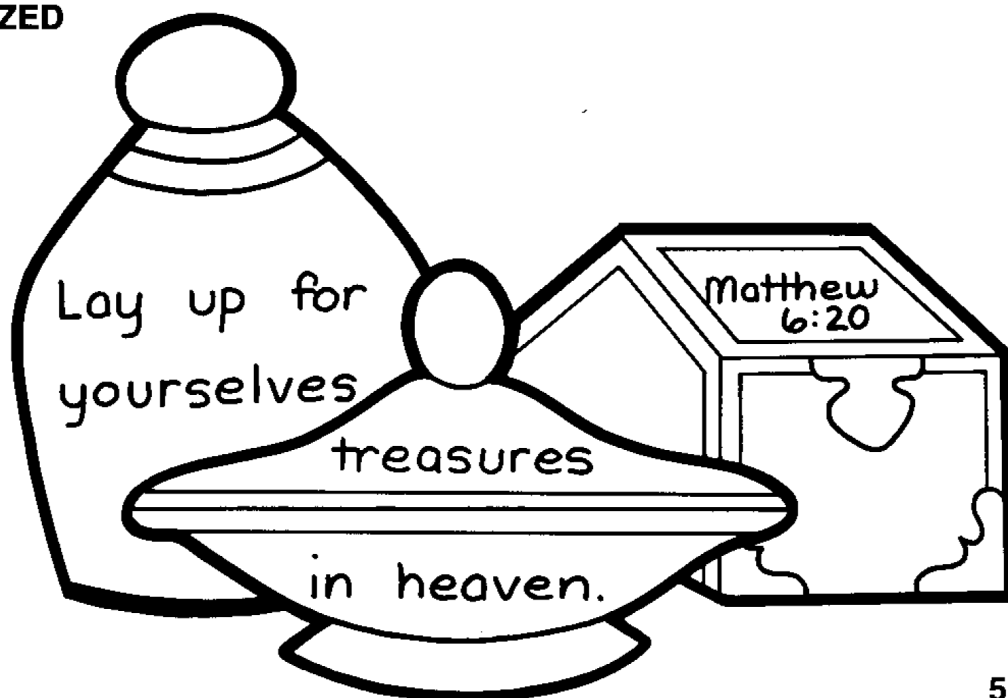


Lay up for yourselves treasures in Hea - ven, treasures in Hea - ven, treasures in Heav'n. Lay



up for yourselves treasures in Hea - ven. Mat - thew six, twen - ty.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED



TEXT Luke 16:19-31

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that once a person is in Heaven or Hell, there is no changing places. They will recognize that eternity is forever.

MEMORY VERSE These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. — Matthew 25:46

The Rich Man and Lazarus

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

THESE SHALL — Point to an imaginary group of people on your right.

GO AWAY INTO — Point with both index fingers to the right, snapping your wrists as you point.

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT — Extend both hands, palms up, and wiggle fingers as you move your hands in small circles (fire).

BUT THE RIGHTEOUS INTO — Extend left hand, palm up; place tips of right fingers on lips and move right hand down until back of right hand touches left palm.

LIFE ETERNAL — Wave arm left to right, point up, looking up.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

Cut apart the two figures representing a sad person surrounded by flames and a happy person surrounded by clouds, along with the base piece giving the Scripture reference. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) As your students learn each portion of the verse, put up the corresponding pieces one at a time.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Bring a full piggy bank to class. Pour out the change in front of your class. Talk a little about what you could buy with this much money. Then tell them that today's story is about a man who was very rich. But he found out that money wasn't all that important.

1. Describe the earthly circumstance of the rich man. Introduce Lazarus, and explain his contrasting situation.

2. Explain where each man went when he died.

3. Describe how the rich man could see Lazarus, but there was no way to get to him.

Climax: The rich man wanted to send word to his brothers, but even this was impossible.

Conclusion: The rich man did not go to Hell because he was rich, nor Lazarus to Heaven because he was poor. Lazarus made preparation for Heaven and the rich man did not.

Response: The students should be able to contrast the eventual destination of the two men, and to conclude that after we leave this world there is no longer any choice about where we will spend eternity.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This is a story told by Jesus which clearly illustrates that our conduct on earth determines our future and the temporary pleasures or trials of this life will be completely overshadowed by our eternal state.

In Luke 16:22 it says that the rich man died and Lazarus died, but this is not the end of the story. Jesus, the One who holds the keys of death and Hell (Revelation 1:18), pulls back the veil for us and gives us a glimpse of life beyond death.

If this story is a parable it is the only one in which we are given the name of one of the characters. Neither Jesus nor Luke called it a parable. It should also be noted that Jesus used this story to confront the Pharisees who, as it says in Luke 16:14, "were covetous" just as the rich man in the story. And just as Abraham told the rich man in Hell that his brothers would not believe even if one rose from the dead, neither did the Jews believe when Christ rose from the dead.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Bring to class several seeds: corn, mustard, or others such as from fruit (plums, peaches, apples). Tell the children what kinds of seeds they are and ask the class what will grow from each seed. Plant the seeds in soil, even if only in a paper cup. Ask them again what will grow and after they answer tell them, "Well, I don't like corn (or whatever seed you have) so I want peaches to come up instead." Ask them if that will work, and of course, they will tell you "No." After we plant seeds in our garden, it is too late to decide what we want to grow, that must be done when we get the seeds. Use that to explain that what we "plant" here on earth will decide where we will spend eternity. If we plant evil deeds we will reap evil and spend eternity with the

devil; if we plant Christian deeds we will spend eternity with God in Heaven.

Have two paper dolls and paste a heart on the back of each, on one a clean heart and on the other a dirty heart. Use the dolls to act out events, showing helpful and sinful actions by the dolls. The class decides where each will spend eternity. If file folders were made, one indicating Heaven and one Hell, the children can place the dolls in the appropriate places.

Start off by giving examples of some things we cannot change. Once we have a birthday we cannot go back to the age we were before we had the birthday. (To better illustrate this, have a cake with candles on it.) Once you eat a cookie you can't "un-eat" it. Once you spend a dollar it is gone. Once your choice of where to spend eternity becomes final, you will not be able to change it after you get there.

Take to class a doll dressed in scraps of velvet or brocade to represent the rich man. Use sparkling pins and a coin purse full of change to illustrate his wealth. Show a picture of an elaborate house. Have another doll with rags tied around it to represent Lazarus. Put on some small pieces of adhesive tape painted red with a marker to represent sores. Show a dry crust of bread to represent his food. An empty tin cup could illustrate his begging. These will all help to illustrate your lesson.

Before class time, draw a large circle on a piece of posterboard. Connect the lines carefully so it is not discernible where you began. Ask the students if they can point out the beginning and end of the circle. Compare this to an unending eternity.

Draw something with a ball point or marking pen on a piece of paper. Make the following application: Once ink from a pen is on the paper, it cannot be returned to the pen. It is permanently out of the pen. Once we go into eternity, we cannot go back to get saved. Our choice made while we are on earth, is forever.

QUESTIONS

What happened to Lazarus? The rich man?

Who told this story (parable)?

How long will Lazarus be in Heaven?

How long will the rich man be in Hell?

Where do you want to spend eternity?

When Lazarus died and went to Heaven, how do you think he felt about the problems of his life on this earth?

When the rich man found himself in Hell, how do you think he felt about his grand life on this earth?

The rich man must have had plenty of time to make money. What didn't he take time for?

How does Jesus want us to treat poor or sick people?

Would you rather have been friends with Lazarus or the rich man when they were on this earth? Why?

List some reasons why the rich man's brothers would not have believed in Jesus even if Lazarus had risen from the dead to warn them.

Do all people now believe in Jesus? What will happen to those who do? What will happen to those who do not?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Bring a toy airplane or rocket ship to class. Talk a little bit about how far and how fast they can go. But, did one ever go to Heaven? Noooo! (Pass the toy around so each youngster can hold it for a bit.) Then in telling the lesson story, explain that Heaven and Hell are very far apart. Once Lazarus was in Heaven (or the rich man in Hell) there was no going back to earth; and what we do in this life dictates where we will go. It is important that we love Jesus and do what He wants us to do in order to go to Heaven.

Show the children the picture of the rich man and Lazarus (see Patterns). Ask them which man is ready for Heaven. Let them open the "heart door" of each one to see that it's what is inside that counts. Have a drawing of money in the rich man's heart and Jesus in Lazarus' heart.

REVIEW IDEAS

To portray the rich man, dress one of your students in wise-man robes from your Christmas costumes. Seat him on a throne or lounge and have servants come in, pretending to offer him food, etc. Hold up signs behind him to show what he is thinking of: money, himself, rich new robes, fine foods, etc. Then show another scene, this time with a student in ragged robes holding out a cup. (Can you stage a dog coming in?) Hold up signs behind him to show what he is thinking of: Jesus, Heaven, etc. Announce that the rich man died. Have him walk away from all the fine things, take off his robe, and lie down. Put cardboard flames around him. Have Lazarus lie down, and put something representative of Heaven around him (mansions, soft music, etc.).

Use two-sided stick puppets to dramatize the story of the rich man and Lazarus (see Patterns). The figures will be: the rich man/heart with self inside, Lazarus/

heart with Jesus inside, sacks or piles of money/outstretched hand with one or two coins on it, lavish display of food/dry bread crust, flames in Hell/ mansions in Heaven.

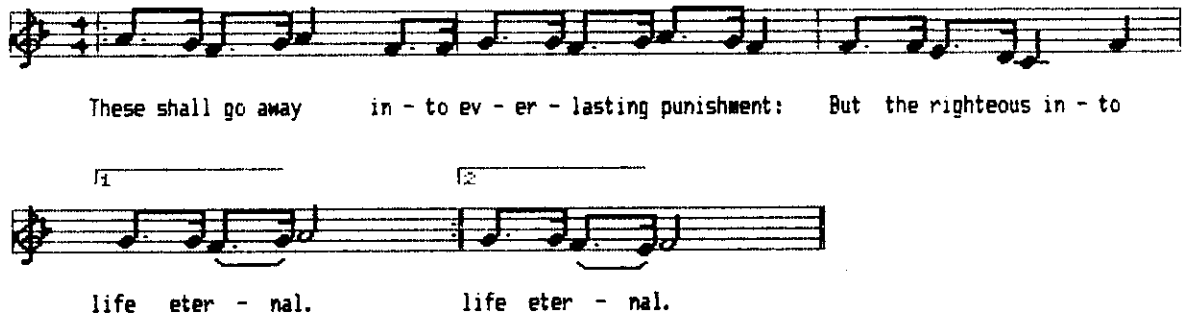
Begin your review by talking about opposites. Ask students if their teacher at school ever asks them to come up with opposite words. Do some examples. You might wish to show some pictures of things that are opposite. Today's lesson talks about two men who were oppo-

sites. Have them help you mention a number of ways in which Lazarus and the rich man were different (home, food, clothes, friends, activities, etc.). Then point out that the greatest contrast of all came after they died — a contrast between where each of them is spending eternity.

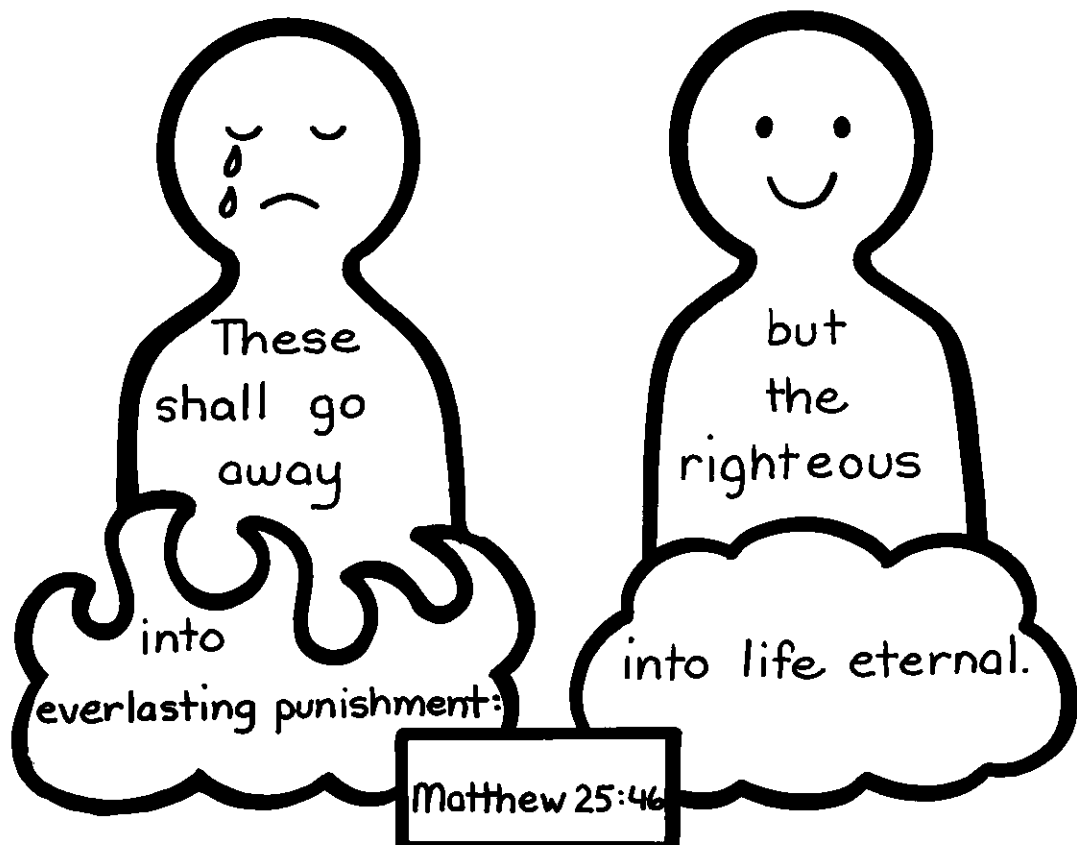
COORDINATING SONGS

"The Countdown Song"

MEMORY VERSE SONG



MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED



TEXT Matthew 25:31-46

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that we choose where we will spend eternity by what we choose to do here on earth.

MEMORY VERSE Choose you this day whom ye will serve. — Joshua 24:15

The Sheep and the Goats

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

CHOOSE — Extend left hand and make “V” with first two fingers with palm side of “V” facing you; with the right thumb and index fingertips (the rest of the fingers curled in a fist) reach toward the left hand and pick an imaginary berry of one of the two fingers describing the “V” (concept is choosing between two objects).

YOU — Point to an imaginary person.

THIS DAY — Extend both hands, palms up, with a 45 degree angle between forearm and bicep; briskly move arms down to a 90 degree angle.

WHOM YE — Point to an imaginary person.

WILL SERVE — Palms up, move hands alternately to and from body (concept: offering a tray of food to others).

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

Cut apart the figure looking at two arrows pointing opposite directions. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Put up the pieces one piece at a time as the students learn the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Bring two packed suitcases to class. Open them together with your students. In one have articles related to a summer vacation at the beach: sunglasses, swimsuit, towel, thongs, sun lotion, etc. In the other, have articles appropriate for a vacation in the mountains: mittens, scarves, sweaters, ski boots, etc. Discuss the fact that we can guess where a person is going by the preparation he has made. Explain that we choose where we will spend eternity by what preparation we choose to make here on earth.

1. Describe the coming of Jesus to sit on His throne of Glory.
2. Explain the division of the righteous and unrighteous.
3. The righteous will receive their rewards.
4. The wicked will receive punishment.

Climax: The righteous inherit the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

Conclusion: It is of vital importance to be numbered among the “sheep” on that day.

Response: The students will be able to explain what determines whether we will be numbered with the sheep or the goats, and must realize there will be no chance to move from among the goats to the sheep.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This parable clearly illustrates the importance of serving God in this present world in order to inherit the Kingdom of God.

Just as a shepherd must separate the wild goats which roam the hills from his own flock, so Jesus will separate His true followers from those who belong to the world. In Scripture, the “right hand” denotes a place of blessing and honor (Romans 8:34). Thus the sheep are placed at Christ’s right hand.

In the account of the rich man and Lazarus and in this parable, no great sins of those who are condemned are mentioned but they are condemned for not doing what they should.

In Matthew 25:46 the same Greek adjective is used for “everlasting” and “eternal.” Thus to diminish the eternity of Hell is also to diminish the eternity of Heaven.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Bring to class any label, as from a can or box of food. Explain that we can tell what is in the box or can by the label. We do not have to open it to find out what is in it. Ask the children if they know that every Christian also has a “label.” The label is the way one lives. If Jesus is in their heart, they love others and do things that let other people know that they are Christians. All people need to do is read the label, their lives. Certainly if their temper flares up and they get mad at the least little thing, they are not labeling themselves as a Christian.

In discussing the importance of choices and how they affect one’s life or destiny, together with the students make up a list of Bible characters and their choices and the effects of these choices. For example: Adam and Eve — put out of the Garden; Noah obeyed God and

built an ark — was safe (the rest of the population refused to give heed and drowned); Daniel obeyed God — was delivered from the lions' den; David loved and followed God and slew Goliath who defied the God of Israel and lost his life. Bring out that God doesn't send anyone to Hell but one's actions indicate where he/she is headed — everyone makes a choice.

Bring to class pictures of items you might want on a vacation in Hawaii and items needed for a skiing vacation. These can be clipped from old magazines or catalogs. Let students take turns choosing an item and write the name of each choice on a blackboard under the proper heading — HAWAII — SKIING. When the items have all been chosen, ask the students if they can think of more to add to the list. What things might they do in preparation to enjoy the vacation more? (Learn to swim — or ski. Exercise and be in good shape physically so they can engage in the activity with less stress. Save money for lessons, etc.) Bring out that long before they actually leave on vacation, family and friends will know by their preparations where they are planning to go and what type of a vacation they expect to enjoy. Not only what they do but what they talk about will indicate their plans.

Use two hearts, either with pockets or a double heart stitched together, having a zipper or Velcro opening. In one heart put pictures or words which represent good behavior. In the other heart, put pictures or words which represent bad behavior. Use these to illustrate that what we choose to do here on earth will determine where we will spend eternity.

On one side of a chalkboard or a piece of posterboard, write the words SHEEP and GOATS. Compose a list of words which indicate Christian or non-Christian behavior. Have your class discuss the meaning of each word and place it in the proper category.

QUESTIONS

What does a sheep represent in today's lesson?

What does a goat represent?

What should we do if we know someone is hungry?

Explain how doing things for others is the same as doing things for Jesus.

What reward does Jesus have for those who take care of others?

What punishment does God have for those who are selfish and only take care of themselves?

How can we best let Jesus know that we love Him?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Give each child a sheep finger-puppet and a goat finger-puppet (see Patterns). Explain that God compared the people who did good to sheep and the people who did bad to goats. Have them hold up the proper animal when you describe various types of behavior.

Give children objects or pictures representing choices — let them select which they like best. Some examples: red or green, dog or cat, ocean or mountains, rose or daffodil. Then talk about the most important choice: whether they want to have a sin-spotted heart or clean heart. Discuss how we get a clean heart. Tie this to the memory verse.

Copy the illustration of the open Bible (see Patterns). On one side of the Bible glue the picture of flames. On the other side glue the sketch of heavenly mansions. Allow your little ones to stick happy- and sad-face stickers on the appropriate pages. Sad-face stickers can be easily made by drawing faces on precut round stickers.

Give each child a picture of a flock of sheep and goats (see Patterns). Tell them that the shepherd wants only the sheep to be in his flock. Have them put an X through the goats.

REVIEW IDEAS

Show a number of choices of which only one can be chosen. For instance: Would you like to listen to this record or that one? Will you go through this door or that door? Shall I pour water or milk into your glass? Explain that we cannot serve two masters. We must make a choice between God or the devil.

Make a series of two-sided pictures or stick puppets illustrating choices of behavior: stealing/telling the truth; disobeying/obeying; being selfish/sharing; being kind/being mean (see Patterns). Talk about how the choices we make will decide where we spend eternity. Final stick puppet should be flames in Hell on one side/mansions in Heaven on the reverse.

Retell Willie Struhar's testimony, focusing on the part where she dreams she is at the Judgment. (See Tract No. 32, "A Little Child Shall Lead Them.")

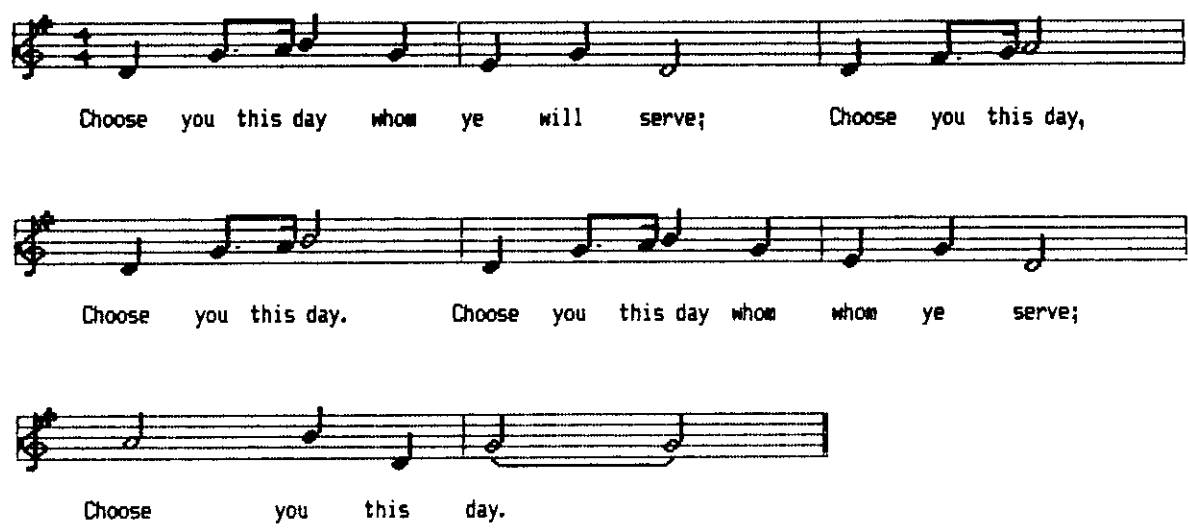
COORDINATING SONGS

"I Have Decided"

"Behold, Behold"

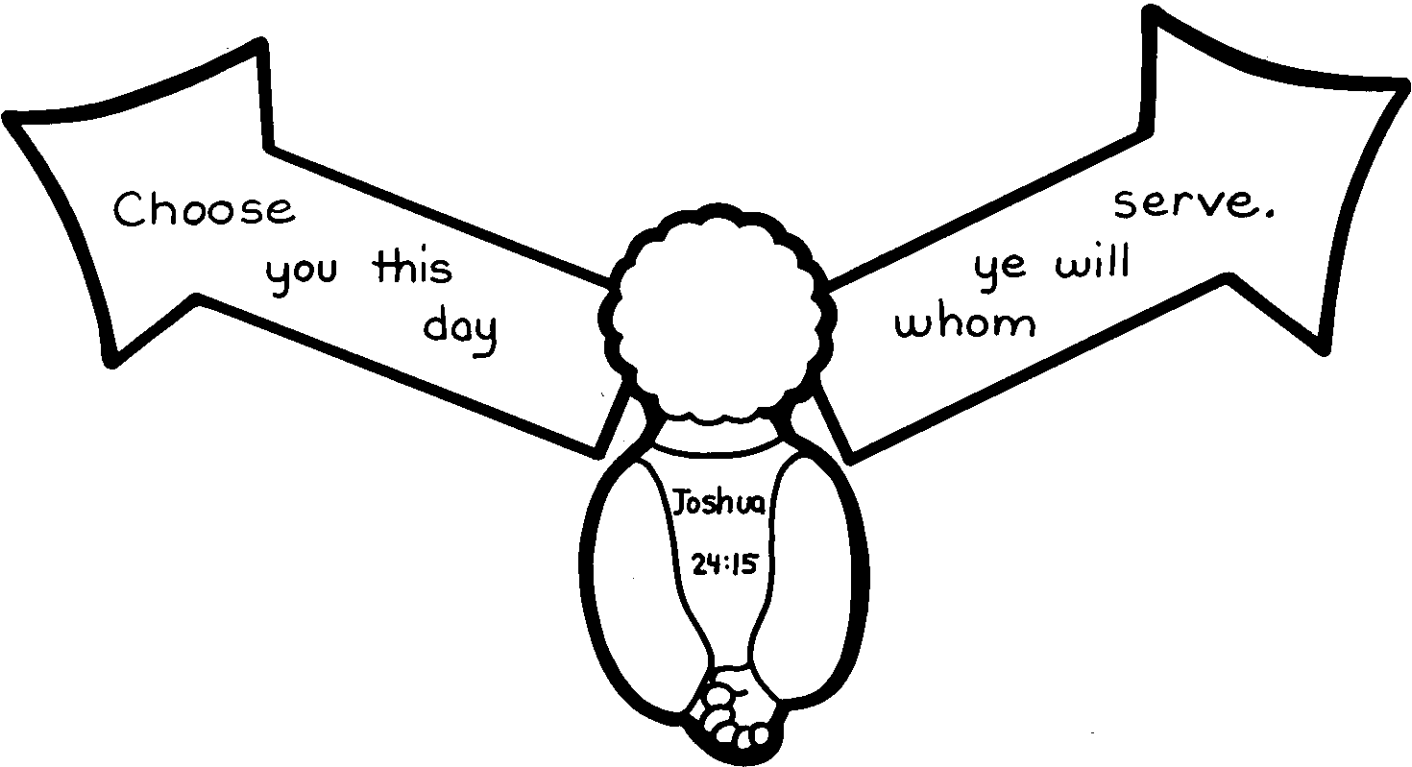
"One Door and Only One"

MEMORY VERSE SONG



Choose you this day whom ye will serve; Choose you this day,
Choose you this day. Choose you this day whom whom ye serve;
Choose you this day.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED



Choose you this day

Joshua 24:15

whom ye will serve.

TEXT Luke 14:15-24

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to relate that everyone is called by God, but that any excuse we give will keep us from Heaven.

MEMORY VERSE Come; for all things are now ready. — Luke 14:17

The Men Who Made Excuses

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

COME — Beckoning motion, using both arms.

FOR ALL THINGS — With right hand flat, palm down, make large circle horizontal and clockwise.

ARE NOW READY — Cross middle and index fingers on both hands and move hands, palms down, from left to right.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

The visual illustration for this week's verse is the figure of Jesus standing beside a table. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Arrange the pieces on your display board a section at a time as your students learn the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Open your class time by putting out a number of supplies pertaining to having a party. Show your students the nice invitations you have selected, discuss the menu you have planned, the treats you will provide for your guests, the entertainment you have planned. Emphasize how excited you are about the party and how much you hope everyone will be able to come. Then ask them how they think you would feel if **everyone** you invited refused to come.

1. A certain man prepared a feast and sent out invitations.
2. One by one, those who were invited offered excuses, and said they wouldn't be able to come.
3. Others were invited to take their places.
4. Those who received the original invitation were not able to come to the supper.

Climax: This parable is a comparison to the invitation God has sent out to invite people to the good things He is preparing in Heaven. Compare the excuses offered to the excuses people give today for not serving the Lord.

Conclusion: When the Gospel call is heard, we must be sure to respond and not make any excuses, for the excuses will be accepted and we will miss Heaven.

Response: The students will be able to name some of the excuses offered for not serving God, and will be able to explain why it is important to answer God's call.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As with many of Christ's parables this one, too, was directed toward the Pharisees. (See Luke 14:1.) The Pharisees were trusting in their religion, heritage, and self-righteousness to save them, but by this parable Jesus was trying to show them the only hope of salvation was to accept God's invitation. And what was the invitation? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

The excuses given by the men in the parable showed a lack of desire. The first was more interested in his possessions, the second more interested in his business and the third more interested in his human relationships. While none of these interests may be sinful in themselves, your students need to see that nothing should assume such importance in our lives that we use it as an excuse for neglecting to accept the Lord's invitation.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Ask your students to pretend with you that you are planning a big party. Tell them you have some invitations to a birthday party where they can play games, eat pizza, cake and ice cream. Hand out invitations to some but not all of the children. After encouraging their enthusiasm, ask them if they will come. Some will say they can't because they didn't get an invitation. You can elaborate on this. You ran out or didn't want everyone to come, etc. Go on to explain about the call of God, how He calls (or invites) us to come to Him. He doesn't just call some but calls all. At the end, hand out an invitation from God to each of the children.

Have some invitations to events, but make excuses why you could not go to them. Make the excuses really silly and unreasonable. Ask the children if they feel that the excuses are plausible. If they are silly enough the class will tell you "no." Tell how everyone is invited to Heaven but some people are making excuses not to go; they feel other things are more important than going to Heaven.

Bring a church invitation to class. Cut people figures

from a magazine or catalog, back with heavy paper and glue stands on each. Pretend these are the people who receive invitations. Invent excuses for each, and cut other pictures from catalogs to go with the excuses; for example, a tent for one who planned to go camping, sports equipment for one who was going to a game, washing machine for one who had to do housework. Compare to the excuses given in the Bible.

Toss a ball to your students. When they catch it, they must tell one excuse people might make for not getting ready for Jesus' coming.

QUESTIONS

Why is it important to come to Sunday school every Sunday?

Name some things that might happen to keep you away from Sunday school.

If you are having a busy day, is it okay to skip reading and praying? Why?

What excuses do people make today that keep them from coming to church?

What special supper (dinner) is Jesus Himself preparing?

For whom is He preparing this dinner?

How do you get an invitation to attend this dinner?

Does Jesus invite everyone to enjoy His blessings and salvation?

What happens to Christians who get too busy to pray?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Use hand puppets to illustrate situations in a family where someone made an excuse instead of doing what they were supposed to do. Explain that at home we may be given another chance, or sometimes we have heard, "You have to have a better excuse than that!" But in today's lesson, none of those who made excuses were given another opportunity. (The puppets could illustrate the lesson story too.) God invites us all to Heaven; He wants us all to be with Him someday. But if we put off praying, saying, "I was too busy"; "I had something else I wanted to do"; "I didn't know when Jesus was coming"; whatever — Jesus will invite some-

one else instead, and we will miss out on all the good things that Jesus has prepared for us in Heaven.

Make a happy-face beanbag. Toss it to your little ones. When they catch it, have them say, "I want to go to Heaven," or "I love Jesus." If they are old enough, at their turn let them tell one reason why they want to go to Heaven.

Make a copy of the table setting (see Patterns) for each child. Have them draw what the men who made excuses might have missed since they didn't go to the dinner.

REVIEW IDEAS

Use the students in your class to help you dramatize a person's inviting others to Sunday school and the various excuses given. Utilize props and costume details to go with each excuse. Some examples: a boy with baseball cap and mitt would rather go to play ball; a girl wheeling on a bicycle would rather go for a bike ride; a girl with a big pair of glasses and a book would rather read a new book; two kids with a game would rather play; a child looking through a TV guide would rather watch a favorite program. These things should **not** be used as excuses for not going to Sunday school or church.

Dramatize preparations for a party: Hang streamers, put a cloth and decorated plates on a table, wrap gifts, set up games, inflate balloons, etc. As you are doing this, talk about the party you are planning and who has been invited. Have a phone ring. Someone calls giving an excuse. Repeat this several times, acting sadder and sadder as the excuses are given. Conclude by comparing this scene with how Jesus feels when people give excuses.

Make an overhead review showing present-day excuses for not serving the Lord: party (no time), family (they don't want to go to church), games (other things I'd rather do), money (I really can't afford it), etc. Make an orange flame overlay, and as each of the above excuses is given, put the orange flames over it and ask whether it will look like a good excuse in eternity.

COORDINATING SONGS

"Wise Man and the Foolish Man"

"Climb Up Sunshine Mountain"

"Gospel Bus"

MEMORY VERSE SONG



Come for all things now are ready, Come for all things now are ready, Come for all things now are ready.



Luke fourteen seventeen.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

