

Lesson 13 / August 30, 2009

A Lasting Vacation

for use as

STEP 1

Lesson 13

Focus:

Those who believe in Jesus will live with Him forever.

Lesson 13

Bible Basis:

John 14:1-3,18-20;
Acts 1:6-11

By imagining the most perfect vacation possible, students will realize that even the best experience on earth is nothing compared to the glory of Heaven.

Your students have likely all experienced that one “perfect” vacation. The one where the weather seemed to be just right, they got to visit every ride they’d hoped to, and every day ended with an ice cream float or a relaxing swim in the pool. But, as with everything else in life, all good things must eventually come to an end. After a day or two, they were probably forced to come back to real life: to school, to work, to their normal responsibilities. Heaven is not a vacation, however. It is *eternity* spent with God—the Creator of the universe.

Have your parents ever surprised you with the prospect of a family vacation? How about a vacation in the middle of the school year? Maybe even a vacation that would excuse you from school completely? And this wouldn’t be just any old vacation. On this vacation, you’d never have to work, you’d never get sick, and you’d have perfect weather the entire time.

- ▶ What would be your idea of the perfect vacation?
- ▶ Do you think that it would ever really be possible for everything to be perfect the entire time? Why or why not?

Although a vacation like this sounds too good to be true, Heaven will be a million times better. More than we can even imagine while we live on this earth!

- ▶ Will everyone in the world go to Heaven? Why or why not?
- ▶ How can you know that you will go to Heaven?
- ▶ You don’t have to answer out loud, but can you remember a time when you accepted Jesus into your heart and let Him become Lord of your life?
- ▶ How did your life change after you gave your life to Jesus?
- ▶ What are some things you hope to know when you get to Heaven?

Lesson 13
Memory Verse

We know that the One who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in His presence.

— 2 Corinthians 4:14.

Remember that death is not a bad thing for us as Christians. We get to live forever with the One who created us. And not only do we get to live forever, but we also get to live in a perfect place—Heaven!

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *Upper Elementary Teacher's Guide*; your Step 4 appears below.)

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A Lasting Vacation

for use as

STEP 4

Lesson 13 Focus:

Those who believe in Jesus will live with Him forever.

Lesson 13 Bible Basis:

John 14:1-3,18-20;
Acts 1:6-11

By imagining the most perfect vacation possible, students will realize that even the best experience on earth is nothing compared to the glory of Heaven.

Materials:

- Helium-filled latex balloons (one per student)
- 3x5-inch cards)
- Medium-to-short lengths of ribbon, tied to each balloon
- Hole-punch
- A variety of stickers
- Decorative-edged scissors
- Skinny markers or felt pens for writing
- Permanent markers
- Glue sticks
- Gospel cards (see below)

By now, your students will be excited to share the good news of eternal life with others. While they're transitioning from Step 3, give each tween a 3x5-inch card with a hole punched in the corner, along with a Gospel card. Ask them to decorate one side of the card with stickers or a picture or a favorite Bible verse.

When they are finished decorating the card, ask them to paste a Gospel card onto the other side of their index card. The Gospel card can be very simple: see the suggested websites below for suggestions on a brief presentation. Using your presentation of choice, print multiple copies on thin copier paper and use decorative-edged scissors to cut each card out.

Also optional: at the bottom of your Gospel cards, you may opt to include the URL of beneficial websites that would either clearly present the Gospel more fully or would offer more resources pertaining to Christian living. (For suggestions, see below.)

When they are finished decorating and pasting their cards, hand out one latex balloon per student. Show them how to thread their 3x5-inch card onto the balloon's ribbon, and finally, to tie a secure knot around it.

Lesson 13 Memory Verse

We know that the One
who raised the Lord
Jesus from the dead
will also raise us with
Jesus and present us
with you in His
presence.

— 2 Corinthians 4:14.

Using one of the permanent markers, let each student draw a happy face on their balloon. Now, depending on the amount of time remaining, you can opt to take your students out to the parking lot during the class hour to release their balloons. Or, if time is running short, encourage them to show their parents their Good News Balloon after church and ask for their help to release the balloons later on.

Remind your students that wherever the balloon falls, the gospel is sent. Encourage them to share the same message that was on their balloon with the people they come in contact with throughout the week.

Finally, close with prayer, asking for the Lord to prepare the hearts of the people who will be recipients of the Good News Balloons.

For a brief, simple Gospel presentation, visit:

http://www.theopedia.com/Gospel_presentations (see the section titled, “The Four Laws”)

If you decide to use an interactive website instead of a typed gospel presentation, you may consider using this excellent resource by Living Waters/Way of the Master: www.NeedGod.com

Or, consider using this format, listing some of the questions found on the website, followed by this link: <http://gotquestions.org/Gospel-presentations.html>

For a copy of the sinner’s prayer, see: <http://www.sinner-prayer.com/>

Many churches also have a copy of the ABC’s of salvation on their website, such as this resource: <http://www.cbhministries.org/abcs.php>

Suggested websites to encourage Christian growth:

www.Christiananswers.net

www.GotQuestions.org

For an alternative to the Good News Balloons, you will find instructions for making Gospel Bracelets at: <http://www.operationcarelift.org/pa/makeown.cfm>. Designed to be conversation starters, these simple bracelets use different colored beads to explain the good news of salvation. For a more detailed explanation, go to: <http://www.operationcarelift.org/pa/meaning.cfm>.

(David C. Cook is not affiliated with and does not endorse any website listed on these pages.)