

HEAVEN'S ULTIMATE REWARD

GRADE LEVEL: 9, 10

OBJECTIVE: All of us are invited to live forever with Jesus.

In This Lesson Plan:

- **Adventist Pioneer Story: "Traveling to Heaven"**
 - Thought Questions
 - Journal Entry
 - Worksheet: "Heaven or Earth"
- **Additional Assignments and Projects**
- **Ellen G. White Quotes**

THOUGHT QUESTIONS: (after reading the story)

Suggested ways of incorporating thought questions in the classroom:

- A) Have a large class discussion.
- B) Divide students into groups and have them discuss the questions among themselves.
- C) Assign one or more questions and have students answer in paragraph form.
 1. Who can go to heaven?
 2. What did the people mean when they shouted, "Heaven is cheap enough!"
 3. What descriptions of heaven stood out for you? What are you looking forward to?
 4. What will it be like being served by Jesus at the banquet? What would you say to Him?

ADVENTIST PIONEER STORY

"Traveling to Heaven"

Through the visions of Ellen White, we can capture a glimpse of heaven. Ellen was 18 years old – a teenager – when God first showed her this in vision and then she wrote about it. Here is how she described the second coming and our new heavenly home.

Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man's hand. We gazed at the cloud as it drew nearer and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. The bottom appeared like fire, and a rainbow was over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels, singing a most lovely song, and upon it sat Jesus, the Son of man. His hair was white and curly and lay on His shoulders, and upon His head were many crowns. His feet had the appearance of fire. In His right hand was a sharp sickle, and in His left, a silver trumpet. His eyes were as a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through. We all cried out, "Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless?"

Then Jesus spoke: "Those who have clean hands and pure hearts shall be able to stand. My grace is sufficient for you." At this our faces lighted up, and joy filled every heart. And

JOURNAL ENTRY:

Have students spend 10-15 minutes writing their thoughts on the topic. This can be done at the beginning of the lesson to generate discussion material or it can be done later to help students recap what they've been learning in class. Here are some suggested journal entry topics.

1. Life in heaven
2. The first few things I want to do in heaven
3. Things I won't miss about this earth
4. People I want to see in heaven and things we'll talk about

WORKSHEET:

"Heaven or Earth"

Directions: Fill in the following table comparing Heaven and Earth. You may wish to include things like relationships, plants and animals, food, emotions, etc. Be specific. Then look at the two columns and decide where you'd like to live.

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS AND PROJECTS:

1. Creative Writing: Have each student write a poem about heaven. Post the poems on the bulletin board. If you'd like, you could turn this into a poetry contest. Ask several of the teachers to be judges.

2. Dig a Little Deeper: Have students create a list of Bible texts and Ellen White quotes on heaven. The book *Heaven*, compiled from Ellen White's writings, also would be a very helpful source. Students can work in groups and use a concordance to find meaningful passages.

the angels struck a note higher and sang again, while the cloud drew still nearer the earth.

Then Jesus' silver trumpet sounded, as He descended on the cloud, wrapped in flames of fire. Then He cried, "Awake! awake! ye that sleep in the dust, and arise." Then there was a mighty earthquake. The graves opened, and the dead came up clothed with immortality. The 144,000 shouted, "Alleluia!" as they recognized their friends who had been torn from them by death, and in the same moment we were changed and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.

We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns, and with His own right hand placed them on our heads. He gave us harps of gold and palms of victory. Angels were all about us as we marched over the sea of glass to the gate of the city. Jesus raised His mighty, glorious arm, laid hold of the pearly gate, swung it back on its glittering hinges, and said to us, "You have washed your robes in My blood, stood stiffly for My truth, enter in."

Inside we saw the tree of life and the throne of God. Out of the throne came a pure river of water, and on either side of the river was the tree of life. On one side of the river was a trunk of a tree, and a trunk on the other side of the river, both of pure, transparent gold. At first I thought I saw two trees. I looked again, and saw that they were united at the top in one tree. So it was the tree of life on either side of the river of life. Its branches bowed to the place where we stood, and the fruit was glorious; it looked like gold mixed with silver.

We all went under the tree and sat down to look at the glory of the place, when Brethren Fitch and Stockman, who had preached the gospel of the kingdom, and whom God had laid in the grave to save them, came up to us and asked us what we had passed through while they were sleeping. We tried to call up our greatest trials, but they looked so small compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that surrounded us that we could not speak them out, and we all cried out, "Alleluia, heaven is cheap enough!" and we touched our glorious harps and made heaven's arches ring.

With Jesus at our head we descended from the city down to this earth. Then we looked up and saw the great city, with twelve foundations, and twelve gates, three on each side, and an angel at each gate. We all cried out, "The city, the great city, it's coming, it's coming down from God out of

heaven," and it came and settled on the place where we stood.

Then we began to look at the glorious things outside of the city. 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.

I saw another field full of all kinds of flowers, and as I plucked them, I cried out, "They will never fade." Next I saw a field of tall grass, most glorious to behold; it was living green and had a reflection of silver and gold, as it waved proudly to the glory of King Jesus.

Then we entered a field full of all kinds of beasts—the lion, the lamb, the leopard, and the wolf, all together in perfect union. We passed through the midst of them, and they followed on peaceably after. Then we entered a wood, not like the dark woods we have here; no, no; but light, and all over glorious; the branches of the trees moved to and fro, and we all cried out, "We will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods." We passed through the woods, for we were on our way to Mount Zion.

Mount Zion was just before us, and on the mount was a glorious temple, and about it were seven other mountains, on which grew roses and lilies. And I saw the little ones climb, or, if they chose, use their little wings and fly, to the top of the mountains and pluck the never-fading flowers. There were all kinds of trees around the temple to beautify the place: the box, the pine, the fir, the oil, the myrtle, the pomegranate, and the fig tree bowed down with the weight of its timely figs—these made the place all over glorious.

This temple was supported by seven pillars, all of transparent gold, set with pearls most glorious. The wonderful things I there saw I cannot describe. Oh, that I could talk in the language of Canaan, then could I tell a little of the glory of the better world. I saw there tables of stone in which the names of the 144,000 were engraved in letters of gold. After we beheld the glory of the temple, we went out, and Jesus left us and went to the city.

Soon we heard His lovely voice again, saying, "Come, My people, you have come out of great tribulation, and done My will; suffered for Me; come in to supper, for I will gird Myself, and serve you." We shouted, "Alleluia! glory!" and entered into the city. And I saw a table of pure silver; it was many miles in length, yet our eyes could extend over it. I saw the fruit of the tree of life, the manna, almonds, figs, pomegranates, grapes, and many other kinds of fruit.

I asked Jesus to let me eat of the fruit. He said, "Not now. Those who eat of the fruit of this land go back to earth no more. But in a little while, if faithful, you shall both eat of the fruit of the tree of life and drink of the water of the fountain." And He said, "You must go back to the earth again and relate to others what I have revealed to you." Then an angel bore me gently down to this dark world.

Adapted from *Early Writings*, pages 15-20.

ELLEN G. WHITE QUOTES

- "The most exalted language fails to describe the glory of heaven or the matchless depths of a Savior's love." *Early Writings*, p. 289.
- "We lose much by not talking more of Jesus and of heaven, the saints' inheritance. The more we contemplate heavenly things, the more new delights we shall see, and the more will our hearts be brimful of thanks to our beneficent Creator." *The Faith I Live By*, p. 236.
- "The conflict is over. Tribulation and strife are at an end. Songs of victory fill all heaven as the ransomed ones take up the joyful strain, Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and lives again, a triumphant conqueror." *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 602.
- "To dwell forever in this home of the blest, to bear in soul, body, and spirit, not the dark traces of sin and curse, but the perfect likeness of our Creator, and through ceaseless ages to advance in wisdom, in knowledge, and in holiness, ever increasing in capacity to know and to enjoy and to love, and knowing that there is still beyond us joy and love and wisdom infinite—such is the object to which the Christian's hope is pointing." *Maranatha*, p. 324.

- “If we could have but one view of the celestial city, we would never wish to dwell on earth again.” *Maranatha*, p. 355.
- “Even in this life we may catch glimpses of His presence and may taste the joy of communion with Heaven, but the fullness of its joy and blessing will be reached in the hereafter.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 602.