Preschool–Grade 6

Heaven and the New Creation

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus promised to prepare a place and come again, and God will make all things new. We can trust His promise and have hope.
Bible passage: John 14:1–3 and Revelation 21:1–22:5. Read them before class.
Memory verse: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." *John 14:2 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Draw a big square on another part of the board for the city.

1. Opening game: Draw What John Saw (5–10 minutes)

Give each child paper and a pencil. Say: "Draw exactly what I read, and nothing else." Read slowly: "Draw a big square city. Put three gates on each side. Draw a street down the middle. Draw a river in the middle of the street, and a tree on each side of the river." Compare drawings. Ask: *Did anyone add something I didn't say? Why does it matter to say only what the Bible says?* Say: "People add lots of ideas about heaven that aren't in the Bible. Today we will look at what God's Word really says."

2. Bible teaching: A Place Prepared, All Things New (15 minutes)

This is not one event. It is Jesus' promise and what God showed John. Kids open their Bibles. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Jesus' promise. Jesus told His disciples He was going where they could not come yet, but Peter would follow afterwards (John 13:33, 13:36). **Look up John 14:1–3. Troubled** means worried and upset. **Mansions** means places to live. Jesus said, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself," which means He will come back and take His people to be with Him. Jesus said "my Father's house." **Father** is a Bible word for God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16), and He told Philip, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

What John saw. God showed John these things on the island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9). **Look up Revelation 21:1.** A new heaven and a new earth; the first ones were passed away, and there was no more sea. John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven (21:2). **Look up Revelation 21:3–4.** The **tabernacle** (God's dwelling place) is with men, and God Himself will be with them. No more death, sorrow, crying or pain: "the former things," the old things, "are passed away." The One on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new" (21:5).

The holy city. The city had the glory of God, and its light was like a jasper stone, clear as crystal (21:11). It had a wall great and high with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (21:12). **Look up Revelation 21:13.** Three gates on each side. The wall had twelve foundations with the names of the twelve apostles (21:14). The city **lieth foursquare**: its length, breadth and height are equal, twelve thousand **furlongs** (21:16). A furlong is about one-eighth of a mile: about 1,500 miles! The wall was 144 cubits (21:17), about 216 feet. The wall was jasper, and the city was pure gold, like clear glass (21:18). The foundations were **garnished** (decorated) with twelve precious stones (21:19–20). **Look up Revelation 21:21. Every several gate** means each gate.

Light, river and tree. "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (21:22). **Look up 21:23. The Lamb** is a Bible name for Jesus, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The gates are never shut, for there is no night there (21:25). **Look up Revelation 22:1–2.** The river of water of life comes from the throne of God and of the Lamb, and the tree of life bears twelve kinds of fruit, a fruit every month. **Look up Revelation 22:3–4.** One throne, and "his servants shall serve him... they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads." The One on the throne says, "I am Alpha and Omega" (21:5–6), and Jesus says, "I am Alpha and Omega... I Jesus" (22:13, 22:16). Say: "There is one God, and we will see His face. Jesus is God with us."

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Jesus said, "if it were not so, I would have told you" (John 14:2). Why does it help to know Jesus always tells the truth?
2. Revelation 21:4 names things that will be gone: death, sorrow, crying and pain. Which of these would you be most glad to see gone? Why?
3. People add ideas about heaven that the Bible doesn't say. Why is it important to stick to what God's Word says?
4. The best thing in the city is not gold or pearls but that "God himself shall be with them" (21:3). Why is that the best part?
5. Jesus said, "I will come again" (John 14:3). How should knowing that change how we live now?

Recall questions

1. How many gates did the city have, and how many on each side? *(Twelve, three on each side, Revelation 21:12–13)*
2. What was each gate made of? *(One pearl, 21:21)*
3. What lights the city? *(The glory of God; the Lamb is the light, 21:23)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the words: **Father** is a Bible word for God, **mansions** means places to live, and **prepare** means get ready. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Revelation 21:27 says nothing that **defileth**, nothing made dirty by sin, will enter the city, only 'they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.' The Lamb is Jesus, who takes away sin (John 1:29). God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5). And Jesus invites everyone: 'whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely' (Revelation 22:17)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: when something makes you worried or sad, read John 14:1–3 and thank Jesus for His promise.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. John 14:1: What did Jesus say about your heart? *(Let not your heart be troubled)*
2. Revelation 21:1: What was no more? *(The sea)*
3. Revelation 21:2: What was the name of the holy city? *(New Jerusalem)*
4. Revelation 21:5: What did the One on the throne say He makes? *(All things new)*
5. Revelation 21:16: What shape is the city? *(Foursquare: the length, breadth and height are equal)*
6. Revelation 21:19: What was the first foundation? *(Jasper)*
7. Revelation 22:2: How many kinds of fruit does the tree of life bear? *(Twelve, a fruit every month)*
8. Revelation 22:5: Why is no candle or sun needed? *(The Lord God gives them light)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that Jesus went to prepare a place and will come again. Thank You that You will wipe away all tears and make all things new. Help us trust Your promise and live for You now. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child is sad about someone who died: let them talk, and say it is all right to be sad: "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). Share God's promise that He will wipe away all tears (Revelation 21:4). Don't guess about where any person is now, and don't say people become angels; the Bible doesn't teach that. Let the child's parents and pastor know.

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