

Start-Up/Third Grade Lesson Plan
Lesson 14: Life With God in Heaven/What is Purgatory?/What is Hell?

Materials needed:

- “Jesus Loves Me” cross kits – 1 per child (in large tub)
- MY PRAYER handout – 1 per child

Before class begins:

Prayer:

Our Father/Hail Mary/Glory Be

Say:

- **Tonight we’re going to talk about some pretty interesting stuff!**
Hopefully, by the time we’re done, you will know a lot more about Heaven, Purgatory and Hell! (Hell is not a bad word unless you use it in the wrong way.) But let’s talk about the *good* things that God has waiting for people who love Him, like Heaven!
- **Some people wonder why we aren’t in heaven right now. Why does God make us wait until we die to go to heaven?**
- **Think way back to the beginning of the year when we learned about Adam and Eve and Original Sin. What happened that destroyed our chance to live with God in paradise here on earth? (Adam and Eve disobeyed God and brought sin into the world. Since sin and God cannot exist in the same place, Adam and Eve lost their holiness and paradise and so did we.)**
- **If you could speak to Adam and Eve, what would you say to them? What would you ask them? Would you have any advice for them?**

- We lost heaven on earth, but God sent Jesus so that we could go to heaven when we die. Thank goodness!
- God’s original plan did not include death. When people we love die, we are sad because we know we won’t see them again on this earth. BUT because Jesus died for us, death is now only a door to another world.
- Jesus repaired the damage that was done by Adam and Eve. But sin still exists here on earth so we will have to wait until we die to get to heaven.
- When we die, our soul is separated from our body. We will meet Jesus and be judged on our faith and on our works. Then at the end of time when Jesus returns, our souls will be reunited (put back together) with our bodies.
- So now you might ask, “What is a soul?”
 - † That’s not an easy question to answer! No one will probably ever truly understand what a soul is until we get to heaven but we know that we have a body AND a soul because the Bible (God’s Word) tells us so.
 - † Okay, but what is a soul? (Ask kids what they think.)
 - † Our soul is the place inside us where God made us to be the most like Him. Our soul is the deepest part of who we are.
 - † Remember when we talked about Creation? We said that we were created in the image and likeness of God? What part of us makes us like God?
 - † Right! It’s our soul. It’s the foreverness that God breathes into us – the soul never dies.

† Let's imagine if you were in a bad car accident. You are in the hospital, you can't eat, talk, or do anything at all with your body. Your body is useless. Are you gone? What still remains as long as your heart is beating? (Your soul.)

† Our bodies are the "houses" or "temples" for our souls. Sort of like a church is the house or the temple for the Tabernacle which holds the precious Body of Christ. Do you remember the Tabernacle from our church tour? Where was it?

- People who love God and others and have remained friends with God on earth will be rewarded in heaven.
- People who have seriously sinned and are not sorry, who choose to separate themselves from God for eternity, go to Hell.
- People who loved God but had smaller sins go to Purgatory.
- But let's take these one at a time!

HEAVEN

- What's in heaven? Are little angels flying around on clouds? Is God sitting on a big throne? What's up there?
- Heaven is God and heaven for us means being with God. Scripture doesn't tell us much about what heaven is like. It says there is a heaven but this is Scripture's only description of it: "Eye has not seen and ear has not heard what God has waiting for those who love him." (Corinthians 2:9)
- In other words, we as humans will never be able to understand what heaven is really like until we go there.

- **Nothing our eyes have seen or our ears have heard on this earth can compare to it. Sounds like a place I want to go, how about you?**
- **How can I be sure I get to heaven? What do you think?** (Love Jesus and follow His teaching as much as you can. When you sin, go to Reconciliation and get right again with God (you will learn more about that next year).

Put Jesus first in your life and ask His Mother, Mary to pray for you. Be sure you set time aside to pray and worship – that means go to Mass! Loving God means worshipping Him.)

HELL

- **Then there's the place everyone wants to know about: Hell.**
- **As I said, Hell is not a bad word unless you use it in the wrong way.**
- **Scripture gives us some pretty scary images of Hell: an unquenchable fire, eternal destruction, a fiery furnace, everlasting shame. Those all sound pretty bad to me and they're *meant to* sound bad.**
- **But we have to think about them correctly. Those descriptions of Hell are meant to sound very bad because Hell is even worse than an unquenchable fire or eternal destruction. Hell is everlasting separation from God.**
- **God is life, love, light, happiness, unending joy. A place without God in it has none of those things. Can you imagine spending eternity there?**
- **God made us to share His wonderful life. God wants us to LIVE; to LIVE forever with Him in heaven. But what happens if we reject God's plan?**

- **Here's a hint: spell LIVE backwards. Yep, it spells evil. And evil leads us to reject God's plan and eventually we even reject God. Sin becomes such a part of our lives that we don't even *want* to be with God in heaven.**
- **If that happens, God says okay. God will always honor our choices because He does not want to force us to love Him.**
- **A choice to reject God is a choice to live in Hell for eternity.**
- **One place left: Purgatory. But let's take a stretch break before we tackle that one.**

(Take a stretch break or stop for a while and let kids make their "I Love Jesus" crosses. If you think kids are engaged in the lesson, you can continue and make the crosses at the end.)

PURGATORY

- **That's a big almost scary sounding word isn't it?**
- **But while Purgatory isn't the best place to be after we die, it's a HUGE blessing.**
- **Let me explain: God is perfect, all-holy, all-good. God is light, love, life, happiness and unending joy. Nothing sinful can ever come into the presence of God because then He wouldn't really be all those things, right?**
- **What if you died today? Would you feel ready to stand in the presence of God who is perfect, all-holy and all-good? Most of us would say a loud NO!**
- **The Bible tells us that we must be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect but many of us don't live up to that.**

- **But, I love God! I've tried to live a good life and follow all the Commandments. and I really want to be with God in heaven. I know I have some sins but does that mean I can never go to heaven???**
- **No, God knows that we are sinners. If we have really tried to follow all the Commandments and live as Jesus taught us, then God has provided a place for us to go to have our sins "purified" or taken away.**
- **That place is called Purgatory. It's not the best place because people there are sad that they cannot be with God yet.**
- **Purgatory is a merciful place. It means that we can have another chance to be perfect and live with God forever in heaven. Thank goodness we have such a merciful God who wants us with Him in heaven!**

(Make your crosses now if you haven't already. You may also have the kids complete the "My Prayer" sheet.)