

date: 8/20/17

Bible Passage: John 14; Revelation 21
(Heaven)

Jesus Is Preparing a Place in Heaven

REMEMBER VERSE

See what great love the Father has lavished on us,
that we should be called children of God!

1 John 3:1a

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

I grew up the daughter of an architect, who for many years dreamed of designing and building his own home. As my dad took his ideas from concepts into plans, the anticipation within my family grew. My dad put his knowledge and understanding of who we were into the house as much as he put himself into the design.

I will never forget walking through the front doors for the first time after its completion; I knew I was home. My dad created my bedroom especially for me. In everything from the shape of the room and windows down to the slope of the ceiling and the window seat, this room—my room—was perfect.

In reflecting on the wonderful feeling of having a place in a house that was created with me in mind, I can't help but make the connection to Jesus' words about His Father's house. He tells us to believe and trust. He says that He is preparing a place for us to live in heaven. We don't have the blueprints, and we can't see a model of His design. However, we know Him. We know His passion. We know His love for beauty. If this earth and all of creation are even the slightest indication of His genius, I can hardly wait to see what's to come. We wait in hopeful expectation of that glorious day.

Jesus is preparing a place for me to be with Him forever.

Cristi Thomas
Tru Team

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

In John 14, Jesus comforts His disciples after they learn of His impending death and departure. He assures them of the promise He is making and likens it to the workings of the ancient Jewish wedding ceremony to explain why He is

leaving and how He will return. He says, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am” (John 14:1–3).

Jesus often uses the metaphor of a bridegroom and his bride as a way to describe the relationship between Himself and the church. In ancient Jewish traditions, when a man was to be married, his father would choose the bride for his son. If she accepted the proposal, the bridegroom would then begin to prepare a place for her in his father’s house, where he would bring his bride to dwell with him. The betrothed woman would wait with the oil of her lamp burning as a symbol to her groom that she was faithfully waiting for his return. Once the father of the bridegroom saw that all his son’s preparations were completed, he would send the groom after his bride for the completion of the wedding ceremony.

Today, Christ Jesus is preparing a place for us to dwell with Him in His Father’s house. We too must wait faithfully, knowing He will return and bring us to Himself, where we will live with Him for all eternity.

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God’s Word

We are eternal souls living in a temporal world. This can be difficult. We must live with the hope and knowledge that our time in this human life is short, but the effects are far-reaching. Jesus promised to return to take us to be with Him in heaven forever. We must trust and wait for Him until His return. However, our waiting is neither sedentary nor complacent. We’ve been called into a life of action, a life of complete and total dependence upon the Holy Spirit in every aspect of each day. As we experience God’s transformation and see the gospel coming to life within us, we must share this—the truth of who Christ is—with others. In moments of struggle and victory, the Holy Spirit will supply all our needs, strengthening and preparing us to actively wait for His return.

Lord Jesus, thank You for loving us so very much. May we always trust in You and Your Word. Please fill us with Your hope as we wait expectantly for You. Please allow us opportunities to share Your promises with those we meet. Give us courage to follow the leading of Your Holy Spirit. May the words we speak, and the work of our hands and feet, be Yours alone. We will wait faithfully for Your return—please come soon. Amen.

EXPLORE:: 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day’s portion of The Big God Story.

Option 1: My Father’s House

In today’s part of The Big God Story, Jesus prepares His disciples for His return to heaven by telling them that He will be waiting for them in His Father’s house.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- Paper (1 sheet per child)
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils

- Modeling dough (8–10 containers) Allergy Alert
- Blocks or other building materials
- Optional: glitter, sequins, stickers, glue, and other decorating supplies

SET UP

Spread out materials on the table, making sure they're easily accessible to every child.

RELATE

Welcome children, and begin by talking about homes. **Can you describe your house to me? What color is it? Do you have stairs? How many rooms does it have? Is there a back yard or a garden?** Interact with children's responses. **All of your homes sound so interesting. But do you know whose house is the most interesting, the most special, and the most beautiful?** Children answer. **It's God's house in heaven! What do you think God's house is like?** Interact with responses. **Let's use these materials to build what we think God's house might be like.** Give children an opportunity to draw, create, or build with the materials provided. Talk with them about what they're building, and why.

DISCOVER:: 25 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Ponder Point

Jesus Is Preparing a Place in Heaven

Chloe's Rules

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Chloe's Rules videos](#)
- Worship music (suggestions: "I Can Sing" and "Sincerely Yours," TruWorship *Sincerely Yours*)
- Optional: countdown video

RELATE

Welcome children as they're entering the large group meeting area. *Tech: Cue Chloe's Rules video.* The theme song will play as the Worship Leader/Host enters and makes his way up front, welcoming and greeting children along the way. This should be a high-energy entrance. *Tech: Cue preschool program theme song.* Choose and play two upbeat worship songs of your choice from a worship album that complements the theme and focus of the lesson.

Mail Time

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Remember Verse image \(see Resources\)](#)
- Envelope (large)
- Bibles (your personal and large children's)

- Mailbox

PREPARE AHEAD

Print or copy the Mail Time envelope art and attach to a large envelope. Print or copy one Remember Verse card and put it inside the envelope.

RELATE

Choose one volunteer to hide the mail and another to find the mail. Have the “Seeker” close her eyes while the “Hider” finds a good place to hide the Remember Verse. Once the mail has been hidden, the Seeker will begin to look for the mail while children give clues to its whereabouts by calling out “hot” and “cold.”

Once the Seeker finds the mail, the Host invites her to pull out the enclosed Remember Verse. Next, the Host should find the Remember Verse in his Bible and read the words aloud. Talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting with children.

Lead children in reciting the Remember Verse several times together using a variety of engaging methods. Hand motions, different voices, various speeds, and character integration are all great ways to help commit the Scripture to memory. For longer verses, approach the verse one section at a time, increasing what the children repeat back each week.

REMEMBER VERSE

**See what great love the Father has lavished on us,
that we should be called children of God!
1 John 3:1a**

REMEMBER VERSE DEFINITIONS

Lavished: given lots and lots

REMEMBER VERSE MOTIONS

See what great: Hold both hands open with palms facing away, in front of body, then push out and upward.

love the Father: Draw both arms to cross over in front of chest.

has lavished on us: Extend both arms above head. With fingers spread, keep arms straight as if pushing toward the ground until hands swing down to meet hips.

that we should be called: Cup right hand into C shape. Start at chin and move out away from face.

children: Using right hand with palm down, repeat patting gesture at right side of body.

of God: With right hand open toward left, move upward and then down the center of the face with fingers facing up.

Wardrobe of Wonder

Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- What'sit: Block of Gold (see optional image in Resources)
- Wardrobe of Wonder

- Small stools or chairs (2)

What's It: Block of Gold

Scripture tells us about the new heaven where we will one day live with the Lord forever. One of the many beautiful aspects of the glorious city of God is the street. Revelation speaks of the pure gold street that looks like transparent glass.

RELATE

Invite a child volunteer to “spy” on the What’s It by peeking into the wardrobe. Each time the wardrobe door opens, *cue the Wardrobe of Wonder sound effect*. Have him whisper the identity of the What’s It in your ear to ensure he knows what it is.

Invite your assistant to sit on the stools with you. Then lead the group in asking the assistant yes-or-no questions about the What’s It. Once the children have guessed correctly, ask your assistant to retrieve the What’s It from the wardrobe and bring it to you. Thank your volunteer and encourage him to sit with his small group.

ASK

What’s this we’ve found in the wardrobe today? Children respond; interact with answers. **How do you think it’s used? I wonder where we’re going to find this in The Big God Story. Are you ready to find out?** Children answer. **Me too ... because it’s time for ...**

The Big God Story

John 14; Revelation 21

Jesus Is Preparing a Place in Heaven

Storytelling Technique: Rhyme/Large Motor-Skills Activity

SUPPLIES

- [Optional: Storytelling video \(see Resources\)](#)

RELATE

Hello, friends! It’s so good to see you today! Before we jump into The Big God Story, let’s stop and ask God to teach us. Let’s quiet our voices and rest our hands and feet as we close our eyes and talk to God. Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

One night after Jesus and His disciples had finished dinner, they sat together talking about what was going to happen in the next couple of days. The disciples were very sad because Jesus told them He would be leaving them. Why was Jesus leaving? Wait for children to answer; interact with their responses. **Yes, Jesus was going to die, come back to life, and then go to heaven to be with His Father. Why was Jesus going to die?** Children answer. **He was going to die for all our sins—all the things we do that are not pleasing to God and keep us far from Him. Well, the disciples were sad because they would miss Jesus; they loved Him so much.**

Jesus knew this and told them not to worry and to trust Him. Can we trust God? Encourage responses. **Yes, we can, because He always does what He says. Jesus was going to be leaving, but He wasn’t going to be gone forever. He told the disciples, “There are many rooms in My Father’s house ... I am going there to prepare a place for you. And you know the way to where I’m going.” Where was Jesus going?** Children answer. **To His Father’s house, that’s right! Jesus was going to His Father’s house to prepare a place for us to live with Him forever!**

Okay, before we go on with The Big God Story, I want all of us to say a rhyme about heaven together. While

I'm saying the rhyme, all of you can stand and jump up and down! Let's try it!

**Jesus made a place for me.
With Him always is where I'll be.
Jump, hop, skip, and sing.
Come on show your joy with me.
Hop, hop, hop for joy,
Hop, hop, hop for joy!**

Great job, everyone! Let's continue on with The Big God Story. Where is Jesus' Father's house? Wait for responses. In heaven, that's right! I wonder ... what do you think heaven looks like? Invite children to share ideas. Those are some great thoughts! The Bible tells us what God says about heaven. Open Bible and turn to Revelation 21. Continue with excitement. The Bible describes a little bit about what the place Jesus is preparing, heaven, will be like. It says there will be a beautiful city with a great big wall that goes all the way around the city. The wall is made of beautiful stone, and the gates of the wall are made of great big pearls! The beautiful city inside the wall is made of pure gold that you can see right through! Wait—gold? Where did we see gold today? Children answer. Yes, gold was our What's!t in the Wardrobe of Wonder! Show What's!t. Have you ever seen a building or streets made of gold? I haven't! There's no place on earth like that! You just have to imagine it. There will be beautiful trees, and rivers, and lots of music, too. There won't be a sun or moon to shine, because God will be the bright light that shines all the time! Wow! That's amazing! This is the place Jesus is preparing for us! He must love us so much!

Well, the disciples didn't completely understand where Jesus was going, or how to get there. So Jesus explained more. He said the only way to be with God forever was to believe in Jesus, to love Him, and to know Him. The disciples trusted in Jesus' words because they knew Him and loved Him. After Jesus died on the cross and came back to life, He *did* go to heaven to prepare a place for them. And then the disciples traveled all over to teach people like you and me about Jesus so we can be with Him forever too.

Now it's time to say our heaven rhyme again! This time, let's all skip while we say it. Ready, set, go!

**Jesus made a place for me.
With Him always is where I'll be.
Jump, hop, skip, and sing.
Come on show your joy with me.
Hop, hop, hop for joy,
Hop, hop, hop for joy!**

Just as Jesus was making a place for the disciples in His Father's house, He is making a place for us too! Each of us can be with Jesus in heaven forever by choosing to follow Him and trust Him with all our hearts. He loves you and me and is preparing a place for us in heaven!

Let's do our rhyme one more time. This time, we're all going to spin and twirl. Go!

**Jesus made a place for me.
With Him always is where I'll be.
Jump, hop, skip, and sing.
Come on show your joy with me.
Hop, hop, hop for joy,
Hop, hop, hop for joy!**

RESPOND:: 20 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through creative activities and games.

Wonder Questions

Small Group Enhancements, coloring pages, and discussion questions help your group go deeper into today's portion of The Big God Story.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Wonder Questions coloring pages](#) (see Resources)
- Crayons

RELATE

Even though Jesus' disciples were sad to hear He must leave them, Jesus promised He would be preparing a place for them to be with Him forever. This is wonderful news! Jesus is preparing a place for us too!

I wonder ... **Is Jesus still working on preparing heaven?**

I wonder ... **Whom will I see in heaven?**

I wonder ... **What kind of music is in heaven?**

I wonder ... **How do people get to be in heaven?**

BLESS:: 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Remember Verse cards](#) (see Resources)
- [At Home Weekly: Lesson 13](#) (see Resources)

RELATE

As you close, gather children around you. **Friends, the Bible tells us that Jesus went ahead of us to prepare a special place in heaven so we can live with Him forever. Isn't that a wonderful thought? Let's bless each other before we leave today.** Encourage children to pair up, and lead them in saying to their partners:

May you know God's love and trust in His words.

After children have blessed each other, close with these words of blessing over the group:

May you be filled with the hope of being together with God in heaven forever. Amen.