

Lesson

9

Enjoy God's Plans for His Family

BIBLE BASIS

John writes of God's plans for His family in their church home and in their heavenly home (1 John 3; Rev. 21—22).

BIBLE TRUTH

God plans for His family to live happily in a church home now and a heavenly home later.

MEMORY VERSE:

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!
Psalm 133:1

LESSON AIM

That your students will develop positive feelings toward their church and look forward to a heavenly home.

1

LIFE NEED (5–10 MINUTES)

Play a game about families.

- Materials: "My Families!" Teaching Aid—prepare before class

2

BIBLE LEARNING (15–20 MINUTES)

Bible Words: Talk about heaven and who belongs to God's family.

- Materials: *My Bible Book* p. 35, Bible Overview Chart Teaching Aid, Bibles

Bible Story: Learn what John wrote about God's family and heaven.

- Materials: Bibles

Bible Review: Choose statements that describe our church home and heavenly home.

- Materials: *My Bible Book* p. 38, pencils

Memory Work: Learn about unity in God's family.

- Materials: Bibles, masking tape

3

BIBLE APPLICATION (5–10 MINUTES)

Discuss ways people in a church family can help each other.



- Materials: *My Bible Book* pp. 36–37, whiteboard and marker, photos of church members used in Pre-session Activities

4

LIFE RESPONSE (5–10 MINUTES)

Make a booklet and collect autographs of members of God's family.

- Materials: *Elementary Kid Crafts* for Lesson 9, stapler, *My Bible Book* p. 37, *Friends* for Lesson 9



This symbol means extra preparation or supplies are needed.



Understanding the Bible

Overview of This Quarter: We conclude this unit on redemption by discussing God's plans for His people, both now and in the future. In the first unit we looked at some of God's rules for His people. Next week we begin a unit that teaches ways to build healthy, productive relationships in the family of God.

This Week's Bible Story: The letters of John and the Book of Revelation are commonly thought to have been written by the apostle John late in his life. In the epistles, or letters, John's main concern was the church and the dangerous ideas that threatened its life.

In 1 John he talked about the need for love among the brothers and sisters of the church. How can we say we love God if we hate our brothers and sisters in the Lord, even if they are sometimes difficult people? Since God is love and has given His love to His people, God's people—both then and now—should also be known by love.

John's concern in the Book of Revelation is somewhat different, though it includes similar themes

in the epistles. The Book of Revelation was written mainly to encourage believers facing persecution. John thought they might give up hope and fall away from the faith. John reminded them that God's victory over evil is sure. Those who continue to the end will share in the glory of the coming kingdom, where evil is removed and God's people enjoy the presence of God. All sorrow, death, and pain will be done away with as God's shalom (wholeness and peace) reigns supreme.

Much has been made of the images of John's vision recorded in this book. Many people have attempted to interpret these images in order to discover how and when God will bring about this great triumph. God's purpose was not to give a time for these events. It was to give us a promise to hold on to and a reason to be faithful.

God is concerned about His family. God wants us to share His love with each other now and to experience the fullness of His love when we go to live with Him in heaven.

Understanding Your Students

Second and third graders still think in concrete and physical terms. They love facts. This makes abstract concepts more difficult to understand because the ideas do not paint a picture in our minds. This poses a challenge for you as you seek to make biblical ideas—like salvation, resurrection, heaven, and the universal church—meaningful to your class.

Don't walk away from the challenge! The Classroom Tips give you some practical ways to build solid biblical understanding.

Classroom Tips

Suggestions for making abstract ideas understandable for your students.

- Use simple words or phrases to teach Bible truth. You can use "becoming part of God's family" to help students understand "being saved." Speaking about "Jesus coming alive again" helps students grasp the idea of "resurrection."
- Explain and talk about songs that use symbolic language. Elementary students might get a literal picture of "climbing Sunshine Mountain" or "building your house on the Lord."
- If you're not sure your students understand, just ask them what they are hearing and thinking. Let them talk. Listen well, and go from there.
- Let students know that some questions, such as "What will heaven look like?" aren't answered completely in the Bible. Tell them that many important things are answered (God loves us, how to become a member of His family, who Jesus is, and what Jesus did for us). But some things will be a surprise—better than the best present we've ever received!

Pre-session Activities

Choose from the following activities to do with your students as they arrive.

- Don't forget to have each child present mark their attendance.

Materials: Summer Attendance Chart

- Let students pair off to drill each other on the quarter's memory verses.

Materials: Back cover from *My Bible Book*



"Attendance Chart" Teaching Aid

- On a wall or table, display photos of people from your church. Have an interesting fact to share about each person. If possible, invite some of them to come and tell about their church jobs, families, occupations, etc.

Materials: Photos of church members

- For Worship Time: Play "Arms Wide Open" from the Diskit CD.

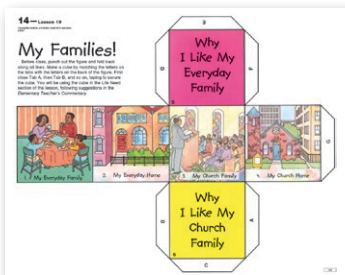
Materials: Diskit CD, CD player



1

Life Need 5-10 minutes

Objective: That your students will think about things people in a church family do together.



"My Families!" Teaching Aid

This activity will prepare your students for the Bible story about what John taught about our church and heavenly homes.

Before class, prepare the picture cube "My Families!" Teaching Aid according to the

directions on the teaching aid.

Before you show the cube, discuss families with your children:

- **Tell me about your family (the people in it) and your home (the place where you live).** (*Be sensitive to those students who may come from a non-traditional family or are from divorced families and may have more than one home.*)

Show the cube to your class and read the words under each picture. **Maybe you never thought of the people in the church as your family, but we are.**

And our church building is like a home for our church family.

Let students take turns tossing the cube and answering the question about the home or family that shows on the top square. For the picture squares, ask the child a question from the following list. For the word squares, the child may tell one thing he likes about his church or everyday family.

Questions. EVERYDAY FAMILY: (1) **How many people are in your everyday family?** (2) **How does your everyday family help you?** (3) **What do you like to do with this family?** CHURCH FAMILY: (1) **Name someone who does an important job in our church family.** (2) **Tell one thing our church family does together.** (3) **What is one way our church family helps others?** EVERYDAY/CHURCH HOMES: (1) **What is your favorite room in your everyday/church home?** (2) **What is one thing you like to do in your everyday/church home?** (3) **What is one thing you can do to take care of your everyday/church home?**

Today we will learn about another home we have.

2

Bible Learning 15–20 minutes

Objective: That your students will tell what John taught about our church home and our heavenly home.



My Bible Book, page 35

However, the real church is not a building, but people.

■ **Some people in the Bible were first called “the church.” Who do you think that was?** (*The people who believed in Jesus.*)

■ **All these people were part of a family. Whose family did they belong to?** (*God’s family.*) Point out the definition on page 35 and have students read the two speech balloons below it.

Ask students to unfold the page. Read the speech balloons, then read about heaven.

■ **What are some things you have heard about heaven?** (*Bring out that while there are many things we don’t know about heaven, we do know some things because God had people write them down in the Bible.*)

God had John, one of Jesus’ disciples, write about heaven. Heaven will be a perfect home for all of God’s family. Today’s story will teach us more about heaven.



Bible Overview Chart Teaching Aid

Ask a student to find the Book of John on the Bible Overview Chart. Have the children tell you what they know about the Book of John. (It is in the New Testament, it

was written by John, it tells about Jesus.) Then point out 1, 2, 3 John and Revelation. Talk about how John also wrote those books. Have the children find and bookmark Revelation 21:2 in their Bibles. If you have visitors or a child who needs help, encourage them to look in the table of contents in the front of their Bibles to find the correct page number for the Book of Revelation.

BIBLE STORY

After Jesus went back to heaven, His disciple John remembered the wonderful things Jesus said and did. John wanted people to know about Jesus, so he preached to them and told them how to be in God’s family.

John wrote letters, too. He wrote to people in the churches, “God really does love us. He loved us so much that He sent His only Son, Jesus, to live with us and die for us. If we’re sorry for all the bad things we’ve done, and if we believe in Jesus, we can be in God’s family—we can be God’s children.”

Then John wrote, “God wants His children to obey Him. God wants His children to love Him and to love one another. If we say we love God, we must show it by the way we act. When we are in God’s family, we show love for God by doing what is right, and by not doing what is wrong. We also show love for God by loving and helping one another. We do what Jesus wants us to do.”

One day some bad people tried to make John stop telling others about Jesus and God’s plans for His family. These people sent John away to a lonely island. It was like a prison, because he couldn’t get away.

The wind blew and the waves beat against the shore of the island. But John was not afraid, for he thought about how much God loves everyone.

One day something wonderful happened. God sent John a special kind of dream, a vision, about things that would happen someday. During this special dream John was awake, but he saw a picture of heaven and the beautiful home where God’s family will live someday.

Have the class read Revelation 21:2 about what John saw. Then continue with this paraphrase of the verse.

This home looked like a big, beautiful city coming down from the sky, and it was filled with happiness and joy, for God Himself was there. And Jesus, His Son, was there too!

Then John wrote, “How happy the people are who love Jesus and obey God’s commandments. When Jesus comes back, He will take everyone who loves Him—everyone who is in God’s family—to live with Him forever.” John closed his writing with a prayer: “Come back soon, Lord Jesus, and take us to our home in heaven!”

BIBLE REVIEW

Ask each student to tell what they liked best about the Bible story.



My Bible Book, page 38

Some students may have picked up the idea that “good guys” go to heaven and “bad guys” don’t. Point out that God truly wants us to be good, but that no one can get to heaven just by being good. We need Jesus; we must believe that He is God’s Son and that He died for our sins.

Have your students turn to page 38 in *My Bible Book*. Point out the pictures of the church home and the heavenly home.

Let’s see how much we’ve learned about our church home and our heavenly home. Read one sentence at a time. If the words describe our church home, have students put a check on the line at the left (under the church scene). If the words describe our heavenly home, they may put a check mark at the right (under the picture of heaven). If the words describe both homes, have students check both sides and circle the words.

Let’s review the things we’ve been learning.

■ **What special place will be a home forever for all the people in God’s family?** (*Heaven.*)

■ **Why won’t we have to help people in heaven?** (*No one will need help there.*)

■ **Why won’t we need to pray for sick friends in heaven?** (*There will be no sick people there; everyone will be healthy.*)

■ **Won’t we need to ask God to help us obey Him in heaven?** (*No, everyone will want to obey God. There will be no more sin.*)

We can feel happy about living with Jesus and with all of our friends. We’ll be part of a big, happy family.

MEMORY WORK

Make a large “U” shape on the floor with masking tape. It needs to be large enough for all the students in your class to stand inside of it.

Talk about the meaning of the word *unity*. Help students see that unity means living together without fighting.

Have the children find and read Psalm 133:1 in their Bibles. Have them tell what they think *God’s people* means. Talk together about how *God’s people* includes everyone in God’s family—men, women, girls, and boys.

Have the class say the verse aloud multiple times. Each time the verse is said, have a child step into the masking tape “U” to emphasize unity.

3

Bible Application 5-10 minutes

Objective: That your students will discuss ways that people in a church family can help one another.



My Bible Book, pages 36-37

Have your students look at *My Bible Book*, pages 36 and 37, side by side. Point to the title and read it.

Let's look at some things that happen with Joey and his

church family throughout the week. Read through the speech balloons and discuss some things Joey and his church family do for one another through the week. (1. Mrs. Green shows Joey's class the new classroom; 2. Ramon offers to fix Eric's tricycle; 3. Joey's father, Pastor Thompson, comforts Mr. and Mrs. Ames; 4. Kim shows Jill how to play croquet; 5. Joey, Mr. Walker, and Debra visit Tina, who has been sick; 6. Joey and his mother help with the Wilsons' lawn; 7. Joey and his mother invite Tim and his mother to a picnic.)

Use this activity as a beginning point to talk about

your church family. If you brought in photos to use as a Pre-session Activity, show those photos again. Otherwise use a church directory. Then discuss the following questions:

- **How is our church family like Joey's church family?**
- **Who are the different church members in our church family?**
- **What are the jobs they do?**
- **What might they do during the week to help others in our church family?**

You may list the names and what they do on the board. **Isn't it great to be a part of God's special family?**

Say the prayer on the bottom of page 37 together.



4

Life Response 5-10 minutes

Objective: That your students will express appreciation for all the people in God's family.

Our craft project will help us find people who are part of our biggest family—the family of God.

Distribute Lesson 9 from *Elementary Kid Crafts*. Have students assemble their autograph books according to the directions on the craft sheet.



Elementary Kid Crafts,
Lesson 9

Ask the students to turn to page 2 in their autograph books. Let a volunteer read the memory verse. Review the verse, making sure that students understand that *God's people* includes everyone in God's family: men and women, girls and boys. Help students see that living together in unity means to get along with the people in your families—everyday family,

church family, and God's family.

This book will help you collect the signatures of people who are in God's family. See how many people you can find this week who are part of your forever family. Have them sign their names on the correct page in your autograph book. Remember, people in your forever family could be from your everyday family, your church family, or other church families. As long as they love Jesus, they belong to His forever family.

You might suggest that students use three colors of pens to have people sign their books: one for those from their everyday family, one for those from their local church family, and another for those from other church families. Ask the students to bring back the booklets next week.

Encourage students to pray for the people in God's family this week.

CLOSING ACTIVITY

Close by having the class read aloud the prayer at the bottom of page 37 in *My Bible Book*.

As your students leave, make sure they have *My Bible Book*, pages 35-38 and the autograph book from *Elementary Kid Crafts*. Remind them again to bring back the autograph books.



My Bible Book,
page 37

