



SESSION

4

New heaven and new Earth



MEETING AIM

To introduce the promises made in Revelation that God will make all things new when he lives with us.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Revelation 21:1-8; 22:12-21



BACKGROUND

Our sure and certain hope is found in the promises in Revelation that God will be with us, his people, for all time. In his kingdom, God will make all things new, wiping away all pain and suffering, all sin and shame. We have the invitation to join in this Promised Land. Through this session, we share this promise with the children with whom we work and pass on the opportunity for them to be invitation-sharers too. This is our great promise, but it is also our great responsibility to share God's invitation with others so that they have the opportunity to respond.

+ CIRCLE TIME



As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle and welcome parents to join you for this time, if appropriate. Encourage the children to share their stories and news from the week and celebrate special events that have taken place, such as birthdays. Ask the children to talk about their favourite places to go. Why are those places so special to them?

+ BUILDING PLAY



You will need: plastic bricks

Spread the plastic bricks around the group and invite the children to take some time to create a model of their perfect place. It could be based on somewhere that is known to them or be totally imaginary. Children may choose to work independently, in pairs or small groups and should have total free choice over what they create.

Once they have had enough time to create their models, gather them together and display them in front of the group. Invite the children to explain their models

to one another and talk about what makes the places so wonderful.

+ BIBLE STORY



You will need: a large sheet of paper

Gather the children together in a circle on the floor and place the large sheet of paper in the centre of the group. Begin the story by saying:

In the Bible, we read lots of stories of men and women who God used as messengers, giving them messages to pass on to his people. Right at the very end of the Bible, we read a message that God gave to a man called John. It was like God painted a beautiful painting right in front of John's eyes, and John wrote down everything he saw so that we can read about it too.

I am going to tell you about some of the things that John saw. As I tell you, see if you can imagine the beautiful painting, here on this paper.

John wrote: I saw a brand new heaven and a brand new Earth. The special city was so beautiful, like a bride in her sparkling, white wedding dress. God was right there with his people. And nobody was sad, everyone was happy because God was right there with them making everything perfect.

God said: "Anyone who heard my invitation can come in! This will be their home and they will be my children. Let them be with me! They can drink from the river and eat from the fruit on the tree. I will be with my people here for ever."

God said: "Tell everyone about this promise, so that they too can choose to follow me."

Pause for a moment and try to stay in the quiet place to allow the children to formulate their images in their head.

+ CHATTING TOGETHER



Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

- What is your favourite part of this story?
- What pictures did you imagine in your head?
- How can we tell other people about this promise?
- Is there anything you would like to say to God about this story?

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: large pieces of paper; paint and paintbrushes; aprons

Depending on the group, you could choose to complete this as one large group activity, or as individuals. Provide the children with large pieces of paper, titled 'God's new kingdom' and invite the children to put onto the paper, using the paint and brushes, some of the pictures they saw in their head while you were reading the story. They may choose to focus on one particular line or element of the story or create more of a big impression piece.

Encourage the children to think carefully about the images they saw in their minds, as they do this. Be sensitive as to whether it is more helpful for the children to continue the discussion as they paint, or whether they may prefer to paint in quiet, perhaps playing some background music. For any children who find this task more challenging, provide an alternative outlet, perhaps discussing their ideas further with an adult or using the bricks from earlier in the session.

Once the images are complete, display them altogether and, if you are able, invite the wider church to come and see them too.

+ PRAYER



Gather the children together to pray, perhaps surrounding yourselves with the children's artwork. Invite the children to join in the prayer time by saying their own prayers of thanks for the things that God has promised in his new kingdom, perhaps beginning with: "Thank you God that you promise..." The children may also have prayer requests that they want to include at this time.

Draw the children's prayers together, thanking God for his messengers who share God's promise with us, and praying for the children, as they go out, that they would be able to share God's invitation with their own friends and family.

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