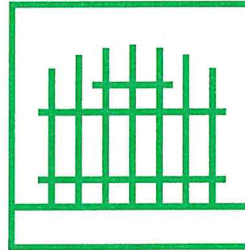


Question 52

What hope does everlasting life hold for us?



Answer

That we will live with and enjoy God forever in the new heaven and the new earth, where we will be forever freed from all sin in a renewed, restored creation.

Big Idea

Those who have been redeemed by Christ have the confident hope of spending eternity with the triune God free from sin.

Aim

To help the children anticipate eternal life confidently.

Bible Passage

Revelation 21:1–4

Memory Verse

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And

I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.’” (Rev. 21:1–4)

Virtue
Hope





Notes

Leader's Notes

Children have varying awareness of their own mortality depending on their cultural context, age, and previous experiences with death. Most will be aware that some plants, animals, and people die, but they may have questions about what happens next. This lesson will help the children begin to understand that Scripture reveals the promise of eternal life for those who have been redeemed through Christ. It should clarify some of the misconceptions the children have about the Christian's final destination and give them a clearer picture of the beauty of eternity. This lesson should also show the children that in contrast to many other religions, Christians have a firm belief about life after death. This lesson aims to help the children anticipate eternal life confidently.

Things to remember when planning and teaching:

- Children struggle to realize their own mortality.

- The afterlife is often talked about in abstract terms, but the Bible speaks of it in concrete terms. Help the children see that the new heavens and earth will be real, physical places.
- Some children may have suffered a bereavement and subsequently may be sensitive about discussions of death. On the other hand, they may be eager to talk about it because of their experience.
- Be aware that some children may have non-Christian family members and could find the thought of being separated eternally from loved ones distressing.
- Remember to mix and match the activities in the lesson to fit your time frame (see p. 12 for some sample outlines). You won't have time to do them all. Feel free to adapt each activity based on your class's strengths and weaknesses.

Leader's Prayer

Eternal God, I praise you for the hope of spending eternity with you in the new heavens and new earth. Thank you that you have promised to give eternal life to all those who love you. May the hope of forever living in your presence spur me on each day

to live for your glory. Grant understanding to the children who will hear this lesson. May they have their eyes lifted from the temporal to the eternal, and may they too be filled with the hope of everlasting life. In Jesus's name. Amen.



Notes

Leader's Tool Kit

- Whiteboard and two whiteboard markers
- Large sheets of paper
- Markers
- Timer (cell phone timer will do)
- Travel brochures
- Paper and pens
- Q52 Memory Activity (DL), one per child

10 Catechism Recap

You will need a whiteboard and two whiteboard markers.

Divide the children into two teams and line each team up facing the whiteboard. Explain to the children that this is a head-to-head challenge! The children should come to the whiteboard in pairs; the first children from each team, followed by the second children from each team, etc.

Read a catechism question out to the children. Tell them that the first to write the first word of the answer on the whiteboard wins a point for their team. (The rest of the team should remain silent rather than calling out the answers.) Play until every child has had a turn going head-to-head to write the first word of an answer.

5 Introduction to Question 52

Tell the children that different religions have different beliefs about what happens to a person after death, and those who don't have any kind of faith may believe that this life is all there is.

Explain to the children that the Bible clearly teaches that all Christians will receive the gift of eternal life. Most people think only of heaven when they think about eternal life, but actually the Bible describes eternity in terms of the new heavens and the new earth. Explain to the children that the souls of Christians who die go to be with God

in heaven, but when Jesus returns, he will give them new, resurrected bodies. God will then make all things new. In fact, he will make the earth new.

Ask the children if it comes as a surprise to them that eternity won't be lived only in heaven, but on a new earth as well?

Introduce the children to Question 52: "What hope does everlasting life hold for us?" Explain that this question will help them to discover a little bit more about what eternal life means for a Christian.



10

Activity

You will need large sheets of paper and markers. Have the following list written down on a piece of paper:

- *Bride*
- *No tears*
- *No death*
- *Husband*
- *New heaven*
- *New earth*
- *Loud voice*
- *Holy city*

Divide the children into small teams and give each team some large sheets of paper and markers. Explain that someone from each team will come up and receive a word or phrase from the leader. The team members then have to rush back to their teammates and try to draw the word for them. The

draw-er should not speak! Once the team correctly guesses the word, the next team member runs up to the leader, tells the leader the word that they've just guessed, and unlocks the next word. Set a timer for ten minutes. The team that has correctly guessed the most words wins the game.

Explain that the Bible teaches a lot about the new heavens and the new earth. However, highlight that it is sometimes hard to fully understand what the new heavens and the new earth will be like because we think in limited human terms. The passages in the Bible that refer to the new heavens and the new earth use imagery the people will be familiar with (bride, city, tears), and those images help us better understand what eternity will be like.

15

Teaching Outline

You will need some travel brochures.

Begin the teaching time by asking for God's help. Ask that the lesson would be taught faithfully and that the children might listen well.

Show the children the travel brochures. Explain that travel brochures only give a glimpse of what a vacation destination will actually be like. It's not until people experience the vacation and the destination that they can fully appreciate the wonder and beauty of the place.

Tell the children that by reading the Bible, Christians can get some understanding and appreciation of what eternity in God's presence will be like. God gives his people enough information to help them look forward to eternity, but there's no doubt that it will be even better and more wonderful than anyone can imagine.

Read Revelation 21:1–4. Provide Bibles for the children to read along.

Explain to the children that this passage is written by a man called John. God gave him

**Notes**

the ability to see what the future will be like and record it for Christians.

One day, God's people will live forever on a new and beautiful earth. God will allow the first heaven and the first earth to pass away, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Tell the children that most Christians think only about heaven, but that's not the end of the story. Remind the children that those who have been saved by God through Jesus will have new resurrected bodies, and they will live forever in God's perfect place.

Explain to the children that this is a wonderful hope! But even more wonderfully, the passage reveals in verse 3 that God will live with his people. Ask the children what they think about the promise that one day God will live with his people in the new creation.

Next, invite the children to look at verse 4. There will be no more crying or death or

mourning or pain! Ask the children what causes these things. Ultimately, they can all be traced back to sin, and because there will be no sin in the new creation, there will be no more consequences of sin. Christians who are freed from sin will be able to perfectly enjoy God forever.

The hope of everlasting life is amazing for the Christian! There is so much to look forward to, and the hope of living with God forever should help Christians to live courageously here and now.

Conclude the teaching time by helping the children commit Question 52 and the answer to memory.

(These notes are just for guidance. Please expand or amend them to suit your own children and context. Write out your talk in your own words and include illustrations and applications that you know will connect with your children.)

**Activity**

Give each child a sticky note and a pen.

First, ask the children to write their name at the top of their sticky note. Next, ask them to write down the name of one living person they would most like to meet if given the chance. It could be a sports star, a movie star, an author, a singer, or someone they love who lives far away. Give them a few minutes, then ask them to write down the name of their favorite restaurant. The leaders should write their own answers down!

Collect the sticky notes. One by one, formulate a question for each child based on his answers. For example, "David, would you rather have dinner with LeBron James at your own house or eat dinner without him at Chuck E. Cheese's?" The choice should always be meeting their hero at their own house or going to their favorite restaurant without that person. Hopefully, many of the children will choose meeting their heroes. End by asking the leaders the same question.



Notes

Explain to the children that some places are really great, but getting to meet some people is even better! The presence of God will be

the very best thing about the life to come. We will get to experience the very best place in the very best company!

5 Discussion and Question Time

Some questions that might arise include:

? Will eternity be boring?

No! Explain to the children that those who think eternity will be boring have a wrong understanding of who God is and what he is like. Nothing could be further from the truth. God created this world full of pleasure and excitement, and the new heavens and new earth will be even better!

Bible teaches that angels existed before the world was created. They are a different category of creature altogether rather than something that was once human. Likewise, humans will be human for all eternity—we cannot become angels.

Also use this opportunity to help the children think about their own lives and how this question and answer affects them personally.

? So, will we be walking around in bodies?

Yes! The new earth will be a real physical place and everyone will have a real physical body. There will be no one floating around like ghosts. These new bodies won't get sick.

- Ask the children if they're excited about the prospect of spending forever with God in the new creation.
- Ask the children if anything worries them about the new heavens and the new earth.
- Ask the children if they are confident that they will spend eternity with God. Have they been forgiven of their sin through Jesus?

? Do people turn into angels when they die?

No! Although movies sometimes suggest people turn into angels, the

10 Virtue Vision

Hope

Give each child paper and a pen.

Explain to the children that many people in the world believe that after death, we will cease to exist. As Christians, we

have the confident hope that we will not only continue to live, but that we will live in a much better place than our current, fallen world.





Although we can't *fully* imagine what life will be like without any sin, sickness, or death, thinking about what it would be like can fill us with hope!

Invite the children to write a letter from their future self to their present self. They can use their imagination to describe what the new heavens and the new earth will be like.

Also ask the children to write advice to their present self based on knowing about this new earth in the future. When the children have had some time to write, ask for a few volunteers to read their letters aloud.

Remind the children that the way the Bible talks about hope is not wishful thinking. Our hope is a confidence based on God's Word!

Notes

Memory Activity

Give each child a copy of Q25 Memory Activity (DL). Pass out crayons or colored pencils.

This is more of a memory passage than a memory verse. Rather than trying to get the children to learn the verse in the lesson,

read through it with them a few times, and then encourage them to meditate on it by drawing pictures of what the verses describe. Encourage them to take the verse home and work on memorizing it.

Closing Prayer Time

Invite the children to give thanks for the hope of eternal life and the anticipation of spending forever with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

