

Grade 1

Introduction to Salvation History

Note to catechist: see Salvation History Overview in Introduction

LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will introduce students to one another and to the theme of their book, *Our Heavenly Father*. God the Father loves us unconditionally, and He has a plan for us to be one with Him in Heaven one day. God tells us the love story between Himself and each of us in the Bible. Jesus leads us to Heaven, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, God gives us His life. Students will learn that God gives us the Church, Mary, our guardian angels, priests, and the Sacrament of Baptism to help us get to Heaven.

AIMS

- Students will be introduced to one another and to the theme of this year.
- Students will know that God loves them and has a plan for them.
- Students will begin to see themselves as a part of God's love story as found in the Bible.

MATERIALS

- Bible
- Crucifix
- White board and markers
- Grade 1 Student Text, *Our Heavenly Father*
- Copies of handout, My Journey to Heaven (see Appendix B-35)
- Construction paper, scissors, and crayons (see Welcome Optional Activity)

Begin the Lesson

Preparation (5–10 minutes)

Use one or more of the following resources for prayer and student preparation for the lesson.

SCRIPTURE: Student Text, p. 11

“No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him”
(1 Corinthians 2:9).

Today we are going to talk about our journey to Heaven. God tells us that no one has seen or heard what God has prepared for us in Heaven.

SACRED ART: Student Text, p. 10

Dance of the Angels and the Just in Paradise (detail), Fra Angelico
All the angels and saints in Heaven are dancing with joy.

PRAYER: The Sign of the Cross, Student Text, pp. 12–13

Make the Sign of the Cross; show students the crucifix and help them to see that when they make the Sign of the Cross they are tracing Jesus' Cross.

Welcome (25–35 minutes)

- Welcome students to their first grade class. Introduce yourself and give the children a description of your life: your family, your interests, and your pets.
- Hold up the Student Text, *Our Heavenly Father*. Explain to students that this year they will be learning about God, Who is our Father in Heaven.
- Hold up a Bible. Tell the students the following: The Bible tells us God's story of love. We are all a part of God's story. This year we will learn some of the story about God and how we are a part of that story of love.

WORDS TO KNOW

salvation history: the love story between God and man as told in the Bible. This love story continues with each of our lives as Jesus leads us to Heaven.

WELCOME OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

- Preparation: Use a large piece of construction paper. Draw as many pieces in the puzzle as there are students in the class. Cut the pieces so that each student gets one piece. Students will decorate their piece of the puzzle.
- In class: Show the students the class puzzle activity; pass out a piece to each of the students. Show them your piece as an example. Instruct students to decorate their piece with something that identifies who they are. Have them put the puzzle together in the center of the table. Explain to students that the pieces of the puzzle fit together just like all of the students come together to create a class.

Proclamation (1 minute)

(Proclaim slowly, then repeat.)

God loves each of us, and He has a plan for all of us to be with Him in his heavenly home. Jesus leads us to Heaven.

Lesson Explanation (20–30 minutes)

Explain focus points in your own words or use the discussion points and questions.

Focus 1: God has a plan of love for each of us.

- We all make plans. A plan is a list of things to do before a special event.
 - *Can you think of a time when you made a plan for a very special occasion?* (Birthday party, Christmas party, etc.)
 - *How did you plan for the special occasion?* (Make a list, go to store, send out invitations, etc.)
 - *What kinds of plans do you think your parents have for you?* (Become a good Catholic, go to school, have fun, etc.)
- God has plans for us too.
 - God loves each of us very much; He has plans for us to be happy. God has a plan that one day we would all be with Him in his home in Heaven. In Heaven everyone is perfectly happy.
 - Look at the cover of our book. It is called *Our Heavenly Father*. God, our Father in Heaven, is looking down on us, making sure we are safe and happy.
 - Look at the picture on Student Text, page 10. This is a picture of the angels and saints in Heaven. They are very happy because they are with God.
 - *What does it look like they are doing in Heaven?* (Singing; dancing; celebrating.)

FOCUS | OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

- Have each student draw a picture of themselves in the center cloud of the handout and then color.

- *How do you think we get to Heaven?* (Jesus helps us to get to Heaven.)
- Let's talk about God's plan for us to love Him and to get to Heaven. This year we will learn more about all of the ways Jesus helps us get to Heaven.
- *Who did God give us to help us get to Heaven?* (Jesus, our parents, brothers and sisters, guardian angel, etc.) All of these people love us.
 - *Who teaches us about God?* (Our parents, teachers, and others.)
 - *What/who did God give us to help us be safe?* (Parents; policemen; home.)
 - *What/who did God give us to help us be happy?* (Families; friends; places to go to have fun—fields, beaches, trees to climb, etc.)
 - *Who/what did God give us to help us love Him?* (Parents; priests; saints in Heaven; our parish church.)
- *What is the name of our parish?* (Answers will vary.)
 - *Did you know that this is a Catholic Church?* (Yes.)
- *Can anybody think of a special time in your life when you became Catholic or part of God's special family? What do we call this?* (Baptism.)
- **Hand out** copies of My Journey to Heaven. (See handout in Appendix B-35.)
 - Look at all of the pictures on your paper. *Who/what do you see that will help us get to Heaven?* (See handout.) All of these were given to us by God to help us be holy, happy, and safe, as well as to help us love one another.
 - *Do you think that God has a plan for you?* (Yes.)

Conclusion: God the Father is our Heavenly Father. He leads us to Heaven through the help of all of the people in the handout. Jesus, the Church, Mary, our guardian angel, our parents, the priests, and our Baptism—all of these things are part of God's plan for us to be with Him in Heaven one day. (Students may add pictures of other people that help them get to Heaven.)

Review Supplemental Lesson—Introduction to Salvation History

- God has a plan for us to be with Him in Heaven.
- Many people help us to get to Heaven: Jesus, Mary, our guardian angels, our parents, priests, and the Church.

Application (5–10 minutes)

Choose one or more of the following for discussion.

- God has a plan for each of us to get to Heaven. He gave us so many people and things to help us get there. YOU are a part of God's plan!

- *Do you believe that God has a plan for your life? (Yes.)*
- *Does God's plan for your life give you hope for Heaven? (Yes.)*
- *Does God's plan for your life show us how much God loves us? (Yes.)*
- *What can each of us do to thank Jesus for leading us to Heaven? (Pray; go to Mass with our parents; be kind and loving; be thankful for all that God gives us; etc.)*

Celebration (5 minutes)

- Pray in thanksgiving that we are all a part of God's plan:
Dear God, thank You for my life and for all of the people in my life that will help me to get to Heaven. Thank You especially for Jesus, Who leads me to Heaven. Thank You for my parents, my family, my guardian angel, and my friends. Thank You for my Catholic Faith, for my parish, and for the priests who help guide us to Heaven. Thank You for my teacher this year, who will teach me about God's love for me. Amen.