

Grade 3

Introduction to Salvation History

Note to catechist: see Salvation History Overview in Introduction

LESSON FOCUS

This introductory lesson will introduce students to one another and to the theme of their book, *Our Life with Jesus*. 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; this story is our love story. God makes a covenant of love with Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. This covenant is fulfilled through Jesus Christ, His Church, and the Sacraments. Each of us is invited to come to know and love Jesus, Who will lead us to His heavenly home. Our life with Jesus is part of God's plan for us. We grow closer to Jesus through prayer, our life in the Church, and the Sacraments.

AIMS

- Students will be introduced to one another and to the title of the grade level book and the theme of this year, *Our Life with Jesus*.
- Students will know that God loves them and has a plan for them to be in Heaven one day.
- Students will continue to see themselves as a part of God's love story as found in the Bible.

Begin the Lesson

Preparation (5 minutes)

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

SCRIPTURE:

"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" (John 11:25–26).

If we believe in Jesus, we will live forever in Heaven.

SACRED ART: Student Text cover

Resurrection of Lazarus (detail), Fra Angelico

Jesus performed many miracles. (This is the raising of Lazarus, but he is not shown in the picture.) He tells us that if we believe in Him and live in Him, we will never die. We will live forever in Heaven.

PRAYER WITH CHILDREN: Our Father, Student Text, p. 155

Welcome (20–30 minutes)

- Welcome students to their third grade class. Introduce yourself and give the children a description of your life: your family, your interests, and your pets. Let them know how pleased you are to be their teacher this year.
- Go around the room and have each child introduce themselves and mention one special gift that they have that makes them unique. Explain to students that these unique gifts that they have are from God and may sometimes remind us of God. For example, Bobby says he is strong. This reminds us that God is all powerful because he is so strong. God made each one of us in His own image. Each part of us that is like God will never die.
- Hold up the Student Text, *Our Life with Jesus*. Explain the following: Here we see Jesus performing a miracle. (This is the raising of Lazarus, but he is not shown in the picture.) Jesus performed many miracles to show that He really is the

MATERIALS

- Bible
- White Board and markers
- Grade 3 Student Text, *Our Life With Jesus*
- Copies of handout, Heavenly Liturgy (see Focus 1 Optional Activity) available in the Online Appendix.

WORDS TO KNOW

salvation history: the story of God's plan to save each of us from the consequences of sin. Salvation history began with Creation and will continue to the end of time. Each of us is a part of this love story in our own lives. As the story unfolds, God's love and mercy become evident through His Son, Jesus Christ, as well as the Church and grace received in the Sacraments.

Savior of the world. Jesus not only performed miracles on earth but He reopened the gates of Heaven so that one day we can be with Him in Heaven. Jesus invites us to come to know and love Him; through our life with Jesus, we will be led to our heavenly home. This year we will come to know and love Jesus, Who is alive in our hearts.

Proclamation (1 minute)

(Proclaim slowly, then repeat.)

God loves us and He has a plan that one day each of us will be with Him in His heavenly home. The Mass is Heaven on earth.

Lesson Explanation (20–30 minutes)

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

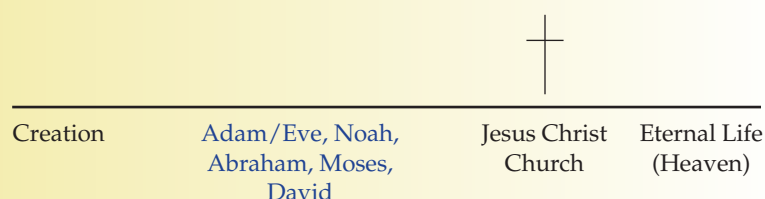
Focus 1: God has a plan for each of us to be with Him in Heaven one day. That plan is through our life with Jesus.

- God loves each of us very much. He has plans for us to be happy not only on earth; God has a plan that one day we will all be with Him in His home in Heaven.
 - **How do you think we get to Heaven?** (Jesus helps us to get to Heaven. Explain to students that no matter how good we may try to be, we still need Jesus in order to get to Heaven.)
 - **Who did God give us to help us get to Heaven?** (Jesus, our parents, and our teachers.)
 - **What do our parents and teachers do to teach us how to get to Heaven?** (They teach us how to pray, and they teach us about Jesus, His Church, and the Sacraments.)
 - **What did Jesus do to help us get to Heaven?** (Jesus died on the Cross and rose from the dead so that we can go to Heaven.)
 - **After Jesus died, how did He continue to lead us to Heaven?** (Jesus gave us the gift of the Church to lead us to Heaven; Jesus gave us the Sacraments to give us strength to love as we should love; Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to guide us.)
 - **What Sacraments have you already received that will help you get to Heaven?** (Baptism, Eucharist [Holy Communion], Reconciliation [Penance/Confession]; for some, Confirmation.)
 - **How do we know all of these things about God and Jesus?** (We learn about God and Jesus in the Bible, which is the Word of God, and by the teachings of the Church.)

Conclusion: Our life with Jesus is part of God's plan for us. We grow closer to Jesus through prayer, our life in the Church, and the Sacraments.

Focus 2: God helps us to know and love Him by giving us the Bible.

- **Hold up a Bible.** Tell students the following: God's saving plan to help us get to Heaven is written in the Bible. Today we are going to look at the whole story, but during this year we are going to learn a lot more of the details.
 - *What makes you happy?* (Answers will vary.)
 - *Can you think of anything that would make you happier than you are now?* (Answers will vary.)
 - The Bible teaches us that our happiness on earth is very small compared to how happy we will be when we are with God in Heaven.
 - *What can you imagine that perfect happiness in Heaven will be like?* (Answers will vary; lead students to realize that earthly things and earthly happiness is not a lasting happiness.)
- **Show students** that the Bible is made up of two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament.
 - *Do you know what part of the Bible tells about all of the promises that God makes?* (Old Testament.)
 - *Do you know what part of the Bible tells about Jesus?* (New Testament.)
 - *Who is the one Who keeps the promises that God made in the Old Testament?* (Jesus.)
 - **Draw** a simple timeline on the board. Explain to students that this timeline goes back thousands of years when God created the world; the timeline also goes forward to a time when we will be in Heaven. Tell students that the timeline will help to explain God's saving plan.



- God created each of us out of love.
 - *Where does God want everyone to be after our life on this earth?* (Heaven.)
 - Point to Creation at the beginning and Heaven at the end of the timeline.
 - Adam and Eve lived in paradise, where everything was perfect until they disobeyed God.
 - *After Adam and Eve disobeyed God, what happened in Heaven?* (The gates were closed.) (Put an X over Heaven.)
- Because God loves us so much, He made a promise to reopen the gates of Heaven.
 - *Who would He send to reopen the gates of Heaven?* (He promised to send His Son, Jesus, Who would come to reopen the gates of Heaven through His death and Resurrection.)

FOCUS | OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

- Explain that Jesus plans for us to be perfectly happy in Heaven. He gives us a glimpse of Heaven on earth in the Mass. The Mass is actually like Heaven because the angels and saints are there. All of the people we have loved on earth will be in Heaven. There will be no pain and no tears. We have a moment of Heaven on earth in the Mass. After this explanation, give each student a copy of the Heavenly Liturgy handout (found in the Online Appendix) to color, or have students draw a picture of the altar during Mass, including the angels and saints, who surround the altar during Mass.

- Point to the cross over the center of the timeline, which represents the life, death, and Resurrection of Christ.
- The people waited a long time until Jesus came. During this time, God made promises to send Jesus, Who would be their Savior.
 - *Does anyone remember who else God made promises to besides Adam and Eve?* (Write these on timeline as students remember a few: God made a promise to Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David.)
 - *Does anyone remember how long the people waited after God formed His people through Abraham?* (Two thousand years after Abraham, Jesus was born.) (Erase the X over Heaven.)
- *What did Jesus do through His death and Resurrection?* (He opened the gates of Heaven.)
 - You are also in the timeline (mark a stick figure on the timeline after Jesus). God's plan for us is to get to Heaven so that we can be with Him.
 - *Who will lead us to Heaven?* (Jesus.)
 - *How do we know all of these things?* (God's plan is written in the Bible.)
 - Jesus leads us to Heaven. *What/who has He given us here on earth that will guide us?* (The Church and the Sacraments; our parents, teachers, priests.)
 - Our life with Jesus is very important, not only because He will lead us to Heaven, but also because if we follow Jesus, He will bless us and we will be happy here on earth.
 - *Can you name some ways that Jesus has blessed you in your life?* (Jesus has given me my parents; friends; faith, hope, and love.)

Conclusion: God's plan for our happiness on earth and in Heaven is written in the Bible.

Review Supplemental Lesson—Introduction to Salvation History

- God has a plan for each of us to be with Him in Heaven one day. That plan is through our life with Jesus.
- God helps us to know and love Him by giving us the Bible.

Application (10–15 minutes)

Choose one or more of the following for discussion.

- *What can each of us do to thank God for allowing us be a part of His plan?* (Pray; go to Mass with our parents; be kind and loving.)

- We have hope that one day we will all be with Jesus in Heaven. ***But for now, how can we be close to Jesus?*** (Pray; receive Jesus in the Eucharist; offer up our sacrifices to Jesus.)
- ***How can we invite Jesus into our hearts? What can we say to Jesus?*** (Answers will vary. Wait for various responses and/or ask students to repeat after you: Dear Jesus, I invite You into my heart; please come into my heart today. I want to learn to love You so that I can be with You in Heaven one day.)

Celebration (5–10 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 and things in my life that will help me to be happy in my life and to get to Heaven. Help me to understand what true happiness is. Help me to pray and to understand that the Mass is Heaven on earth. Thank You for my parents, my family, and my friends. Thank You for my Catholic Faith, for my parish, and for the priests who help guide us to Heaven. Amen.

