

19 — The Life of the World to Come

Objectives

By the end of this lesson students will be able to ...

- state that we expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.
- realize that our body as well as our spirit will share in the glory of God.
- identify the Book of Revelation as the source of much of the information about the Second Coming of Christ.
- realize that Christians will rejoice on the day of the Second Coming for the Kingdom of God is at hand.

For the Catechist

In this final lesson for Unit 4, the students learn that they must wait in hope for their own glory. Asking adolescents to wait for anything is difficult; yet this unit asks them to wait in hope until the end of time that only God knows when it will be. This lesson helps the students realize that living in Christ on earth is well worth it because their reward will be great in heaven. Learning to be patient while waiting for something even better is a goal everyone should try to attain.

Details about the Book of Revelation and the Second Coming of Christ are included for the first time in this *God With Us* series. To help the students experience the overwhelming imagery of the Book of Revelation, the playing of Handel's *Messiah* is part of this lesson. Handel's oratorio, *Messiah*, includes several of the hymns idealized in Revelation. These choruses with their overpowering harmonies are perhaps the best commentary on Revelation ever written because they do not attempt to explain the Biblical imagery. Instead the music conveys the experience of the imagery.

This lesson asks the students to understand that after the Second Coming our body will be raised from the dead. Then our body and soul will become one as God planned from the beginning. That means that we Christians do not believe in reincarnation. The body is of great importance to our soul; therefore, our soul cannot appear in more than one body. Cremation is another topic that the students might want to discuss. In advance, ask your priest for the details of your Church's teaching on the subject of cremation.

Materials Needed

Opening Prayer: Vesper folder

Review: Easel or wall pad markers with the objectives listed

Introduction: Paper, pencils, Handel's *Messiah*, cd player, "Introduction Handout"

Guided Reading: student text, pens, pencils, paper

Vespers: Folders, prayer sheets, tape or glue, scissors

Activity A: "Journal," and Journal folders and pens or pencils

Closing Prayer: Vespers folders

1. Opening Prayer

- Gather in the icon corner and distribute the Vespers folders.
- Ask one student to choose the opening prayer.

2. Review

Review the main points of the previous lesson:

- Each day we make choices either to grow in relationship with God and others or to live in isolation.
- Life after death is a progressive continuation of the choice made either for or against God while on earth.
- *Heaven* is experienced as a close relationship with God that continues and grows after death.
- *Hell* is experienced as a rejection of God that continues after death and cannot be changed.

3. Introduction Play excerpts from Handel's *Messiah*. Ask the students to list the emotions they are experiencing as they listen to the music and the words. Tell them to look at the icon on the first page of this lesson as they listen. [If possible, have the students go into your church to listen to Handel's *Messiah*. Tell them to look at the Pantocrator icon as they listen.] Ask the following:

1. *What are the words telling you?* [Introduction Handout has some of the words.]
2. *What feeling did you experience from this music about the Second Coming of Christ?*
3. *Have you ever heard the words used in this recording? When? Where?*
4. *Write a text message that you would send to a friend telling them about listening to Handel's Messiah. Share your message with the class.*

Alternative:

- Ask the students to think about a trip they took sometime in their life for which they were a little worried.
- Tell them to write one or two reasons they were concerned.
- Now write if the trip was worth it.
- Discuss why people look forward to adventures.

Background Reading (Come, Lord)

"The human race will someday end because we are creatures incarnate in time, which itself must end. For the non-believer nothing exists beyond the end. Because of our faith in Christ, however, we believe that in the end God will 'bring all things in the heavens and on earth into one under Christ's headship' (Eph 1:10). Christians hope in the *parousia* [Second Coming] as fulfillment of His plan for humanity. Thus a common prayer of the early Christians was 'Come, Lord' (*Marana tha*). It remains so in the Church's liturgy. 'Every time, then, you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes' (1 Cor 11:26). The hope of the future kingdom is so firmly rooted in the Gospels and the apostolic writings that it became one of the central articles of faith in the Creed: 'I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, [who] shall come again with glory, to judge the living and the dead, and of His kingdom there shall be no end ... I expect the resurrection of the dead; and the life of the world to come' (Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed)" (LLI 63-64).

4. Guided Reading, Page 95, "We Are Waiting"

Read this section and ask the students if they ever thought about what they are waiting for. Ask them to share some of their thoughts.

Guided Reading, Pages 95-96, "The Bible"

- Read this section aloud.
- Ask the students to circle the titles that are given to Jesus Christ. [If you listened to the *Messiah*, ask them which title they heard in the singing.]

Guided Reading, Page 96, "The End of the World"

- Read the first paragraph, and ask all the students to read aloud the scriptural passage and the last paragraph.
- Discuss how we Christians respond to the end of the world versus the way non-believers would respond. Help them realize how important their belief in Christ is.

5. Ancient Wisdom for Today

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud the information on this page. Have the students write their answers to the questions and share them with the class.

[Suggestions: Each day as we grow older, our bodies and thoughts change; and each day we make choices that can lead us closer to God—closer to eternal life with God that will follow our death; Theophilus believes the body will rise again.

6. Icon Study

- Have the students read the commentary on the icon of Jesus Christ the Teacher.
- If possible go into your church to find this icon. Ask the students to stand directly in front of it. Then ask the students to stand under the Pantocrator icon.
- Ask them to share how these icons can help them experience God is with them.

Background Reading (The Resurrected Body)

"When St. Paul went to Athens and preached about Christ's resurrection, they laughed at him (Acts 17), because many of the Athenians believed that the body was a prison, something to be escaped from. Who would want it back? The Fathers continually fought against this Greek philosophical viewpoint as being opposed to the Scriptures. In the same way they rejected the idea of reincarnation, where a soul supposedly moves from body to body in search of fulfillment. The Scriptures and the Fathers saw the person as a unity which could only find complete fulfillment in the form of its original creation, one body and one soul together.

"This doctrine of the ultimate resurrection of the body is one of the essential teachings of the Christian faith, which is why it finds a place in the Nicene Creed....

"The climax of our destiny as human beings, then, is to have our bodies restored to us. However, that is not to say that the form of the resurrected body is the same as the one it is now. Rather, 'He will give a new form to this lowly body of ours and remake it according to the pattern of His glorified body, by His power to subject everything to Himself.' (Phillippians 3:21)" (*With Eyes of Faith* 95-96).

7. Vespers

- Have the students read the information about "Lord, have mercy."
- Distribute the Vespers folder.
- Give each student one copy of the Dismissal Prayer (see page 146).
- Ask the students to tape or glue this prayer onto a new page in their Vespers folder.

8. Activity A: My Personal Journal

Distribute Worksheet A along with pens or pencils. Have the students complete the worksheet in silence (or you can play religious music if available) and place it in their folder. Plan accordingly, but they should need no more than 5 minutes to complete the journal entry.

9. Activity B: Unit Review

Divide the into groups of 2. Have them ask each other the questions and give time to discuss the answers.

10. Summary

Review the lesson. Ask if they are any further comments or questions about today's topics.

11. Closing Prayer

- Gather in the icon corner.
- Pray the Dismissal Prayers
- Ask the student to go to the first page in their folder and pray from "Heavenly King" to "The Lord's Prayer." Encourage them to say these prayers without looking at their folder.

DISMISSAL

PRIEST: Wisdom!

ALL: Give the blessing!

PRIEST: Blessed and glorified are You, O Christ our God, always, now and ever, and forever.

ALL: Amen. Make firm, O God, the Catholic faith forever and ever. Amen.

PRIEST: O all-holy Mother of God, save us.

ALL: More honorable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, who, a virgin, gave birth to God the Word, you, truly the Mother of God, we magnify.

PRIEST: Glory be to You, O Christ, our God, our hope; glory be to You!

ALL: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever. Amen. Lord, have mercy! Lord, have mercy! Lord, have mercy! Give the blessing!

PRIEST: May Christ our true God, (risen from the dead), have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of His most holy Mother, of the holy, glorious, and illustrious Apostles; through the prayers of Saint N., Patron of this holy temple, and through the prayers of all the Saints, for He is gracious and loves us all.

ALL: Amen.

I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH,

I know that my Redeemer liveth,
and that He shall stand at the latter day
upon the earth;
And though worms destroy this body,
yet in my flesh shall I see God.
For now is Christ risen from the dead,
the first fruits of them that sleep.

BEHOLD, I TELL YOU A MYSTERY

Behold, I tell you a mystery:
We shall not all sleep;
but we shall all be changed
in a moment,
in the twinkling of an eye,
at the last trumpet.

THE TRUMPET SHALL SOUND

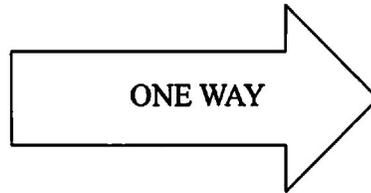
The trumpet shall sound,
and the dead shall be raised incorruptible.
And we shall be changed.
For this corruptible
must put on incorruption
And this mortal
must put on immortality.

HALLELUJAH

Hallelujah!
for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.
The kingdom of this world
is become the kingdom of our Lord,
and of His Christ;
And He shall reign forever and ever.
King of kings and Lord of lords.
Hallelujah!

Handel's *Messiah*

My Personal Journal



Look carefully at the various traffic signs above.

Which sign would have best described you at the beginning of this year? Why?

Which sign best describes you now? Why?

Because we are still in the process of "becoming God-like," which sign might best describe you next year? Explain your answer.

Unit 4 Review

Lesson 15:

- 1) On what is our Christian worldview based? *(On God's revelation and our Tradition)*
- 2) How does our Christian worldview direct us to look at history? *(We see the events of history leading to the fulfillment of creation and the glory of Christ.)*
- 3) On what should we make our choices in life? *(On our Christian worldview that leads us to our fulfillment in Christ that is yet to come.)*
- 4) What gives us our hope? *(Our union with Christ)*

Lesson 16:

- 6) When did we begin our life in Christ? *(At our Baptism)*
- 7) With whom must we cooperate in order to become "God-like"? *(With God and His plan for our eternal life.)*
- 8) What does the word theosis or deification mean? *(To become "God-like ")*

Lesson 17:

- 9) What has Christ's Resurrection gained for us? *(Our life with God forever.)*
- 10) Why do we pray for the dead? *(We believe our prayers will help them attain their final state of triumph on the Last Day.)*

Lesson 18:

- 11) According to Scripture, what is "heaven"? *(A close relationship with God that continues and grows after death.)*
- 12) According to Scripture, what is "hell"? *(A rejection of God that continues after death and cannot be changed.)*
- 13) How do the choices we make as we live determine our life after death? *(Our choices lead to our relationship with God, and that same relationship continues after death).*

Lesson 19:

- 14) In the Nicene Creed we proclaim for what we are waiting at the end of time. What do we say we expect? *(We expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come)*
- 15) What book of the Bible includes imagery about the Second Coming of Christ? *(Book of Revelation)*
- 16) When will our body join our spirit to share in the glory of God? *(On the Last Day)*