

As A Thief In The Night

2 Peter 3:10-13

MEMORY VERSE

2 PETER 3:10

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A paper plate and small prizes (enough for all of the children in your class).

Several sheets of various colored construction paper, a marker and scissors.

As many 12” x 6” strips of construction paper as the number of children in your class and string (24” for each child).

ATTENTION GETTER!

At the Bus Stop

Have kids “ride the bus” to the toy store. Set up a toy store on one side of the room. You can have small prizes or toys (pencils, etc.) to give to the children. Designate one child as the bus driver and give him/her a paper plate steering wheel.

Designate another area of the room as the bus stop. Have the driver come to the bus stop and pick up 2 or 3 children at a time to go to the candy store. Then return them to the bus stop. The key is that the next child to be picked up has to be waiting at the exact spot or the bus driver will move on. Explain to your bus driver ahead of time that if any children are not ready then move on without them. If the children are not at the exact bus stop then they miss the bus.

Meanwhile, you or another person can be trying to distract the children so that they miss out when the bus comes. Explain that with the Lord’s return we don’t want to be distracted by this world, but found watching and waiting for Him.

LESSON TIME!

There's a story of a person who whenever asked, "Hey, what's up?" his response was always the same. He answers with "Heaven." What a great reminder for us that our attention should be on the eternal things and not just on the things of this earth. Our lesson today will be a great reminder to "look for a new heaven and a new earth," and unto the Lord who will create them. **Jesus wants us to be watching and waiting for His return.**

2 PETER 3:10

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

The apostle Peter has been speaking of the judgment of God. God will one day judge evil. Some people think that God is not able to do away with evil. They may ask why God allows evil to continue today. They believe that God is not real because there is evil in the world. Some may say, "If He is a loving God then why does He allow all of this evil to continue?" Maybe they think that He is not powerful enough to defeat evil.

Peter has been explaining that God is powerful enough to put an end to evil, and He will put an end to evil one day. The only reason God does not put evil to an end is because He is "longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

As God is patient, He is waiting a little bit longer before He pours out His wrath on wickedness and rebellion, so that more people can receive His grace and mercy and be saved.

"But the day of the Lord will come." His judgment and wrath will come (1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 and Acts 2:20). The Bible says He will come like a thief in the night. Jesus uses this phrase in Matthew 24:43 and Luke 12:39 also. For all of those people who think that God will never bring judgment they will be surprised.

Whenever a thief wants to steal, he doesn't announce it ahead of time. The best thing that he can do is to catch his victim by surprise. Usually a thief comes in the night and the darker the better. The more that people mock God and are sure that judgment will never come, the more surprised they will be.

It will be a surprise to the people of the world when the Lord returns. Are you expecting the Day of the Lord? Do you believe God will put an end to evil and sin one day soon? **Jesus wants us to be watching and waiting for His return.**

The Lord will destroy the earth and all the heavens. The noise of the explosion will be great. All of the material in the universe will melt. The only thing we can compare it to is the nuclear bomb. Everything explodes from the inside out, with an intense heat. There will be nothing left. No buildings, no trees, no rocks, no cars, nothing will be left. Both the earth and all of man's works on the earth will perish. This is God's promise.

Puzzle Put-Together

For this activity you will need several sheets of various colored construction paper, a marker and scissors. Divide your class into groups of four children. Before class cut out four geometric shapes (circle, triangle, square and rectangle) on different color sheets of construction paper. Try to anticipate how many children you will have in class, this will determine how many shapes to cut out.

After cutting out the shapes write one of the following words or phrases on each shape: Watch, Wait, Serve God, Serve Others. These are the things we should be doing while waiting for Jesus' return. Next, cut each shape into 4 - 5 pieces to form a puzzle.

During class, as your children are in groups, give each group a set of four puzzles and have them work as a group to find the four things that we should be doing as we wait for the Lord's return. After the puzzles are complete use this as an opportunity to reinforce today's lesson.

2 PETER 3:11,12

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

The question is then what will be left when the Day of the Lord is over? The answer is you and I will be left! When all of these things are dissolved, you and I are going to be left to stand before God. All that will be left of our lives will be us. All of the things in this world will burn. Your money, your toys, your house, and all that you possess will burn.

So Peter asks us a great question. So then, “What kind of person should we be?” The answer is that we should be lovers of God and accepting of His grace and mercy extended to us through Jesus. God’s Son is given to us so that we could have our sins forgiven.

Without Jesus there is no forgiveness of our sins. If we are without Jesus we are guilty before God (Romans 6:23). If we are guilty before God, then we are going to stand before God in judgment. God will judge sinful man. The Bible says that the judgment will be Hell (Revelation 21:8) which is referred to as the lake of fire. If we have never trusted in Jesus and asked Him to forgive us then we will be judged.

The kind of people we should be is the kind that is looking for the day of the Lord, living in “holy conduct and godliness.” The word “manner” means exotic, out of this world, foreign. We should live like we are not of this world. Like pilgrims or foreigners in this world, it should never become our home.

This world has nothing to offer that is worth rejecting God’s love and salvation. We should be the kind of people who are looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. We should be living for the Lord while being ready for no man knows the hour that He might come to rapture us! **Jesus wants us to be watching and waiting for His return.**

2 PETER 3:13

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

All eyes should be looking for a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness rules. Our eyes are not on God’s wrath being poured out, but on Him ruling over a new heaven and earth. This should be a motivation to see people accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior and to live a life of holiness before God.

Heaven is not just a destination but also a great motivation to reach lost people. One day righteousness will dwell on the earth, the new earth, and Jesus Christ will rule and reign. The Day of the Lord is coming, but are we living and looking for the Day of the Lord? So! What’s up? Heaven! **Jesus wants us to be watching and waiting for His return.**

Binoculars

Bring binoculars or a telescope to class to demonstrate things that help us to look at things better. Discuss ways that we can watch and wait for Jesus' return.

Make paper binoculars by cutting a strip of 12" x 6" construction paper (this can be done ahead of class if you would like). Fold it in half to make it 6" x 6" then unfold. Roll half of the paper from one end and half from the other end. Tape them while they touch. A string neck strap can be taped on. Cut at least 24" of string for each binocular and tape one end of the string to each side of the rolled up paper tubes.

Optional: Have the children write the memory verse or a phrase like, "I'm watching for Jesus' return" on a separate, small piece of paper and using a glue stick, glue it to the top of the binoculars.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to watch and wait for Jesus' return. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.